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TROUBLES ABROAD.

THE late news from America strikingly displays the value of a good General. It is true this news is still as confused, as dark, as fragmentary as it has been for several months past; but, unless the general upshot of events has been greatly exaggerated, the Confederates have suffered a very serious disaster through the incompetency of their only bad General. In fact, it is a double disaster. If we are to believe the accounts from both sides, Bragg undoubtedly lost an opportunity at Chicamauga of crushing the Federals under Rosecranz; a victory that must have been followed by the certain defeat of Burnside's army, and, probably, by such a demonstration of force on the Potomac as would have driven Meade, crippled, within the lines at Washington. This glorious chance was gained at immense loss to the winner; it was forfeited in the same hour; and Bragg gave his enemies an opportunity of crushing him, which they seem to have taken full advantage of. Such an event is enough to drive a people to exasperation, if not to despair.

It may be, indeed, that we have not yet learned the truth of the matter as regards the second disaster; and certain circumstances lead to the inference that the full tale has not been told. We have had the testimony of Southern as well as Northern witnesses to the assertion that, though Grant had been heavily reinforced, Bragg's forces had also been swelled

into a vast army; and that he should retreat from a commanding position with as many men, or nearly as many men, as his enemy possessed, is not to be explained on the score of weakness, especially as he seems to have been well found in guns, ammunition, food, and forage. Then it must have been a strategical movement; and if so, we can scarcely believe Bragg so bad a General as to take a step like that in such a blundering way as to expose his army to the rout described in the telegrams. There can be no doubt that Bragg made a deliberate retreat, and that the movement was not known to Grant for a day or two; but then we hear of pursuit, and slaughter, and captured cannon, and blazing stores immediately—just such disasters as only follow in the usual course of things after a pitched battle and decisive defeat. We hesitate when we read the story, scarcely believing that it can be true. "The Confederates are reported to have thrown down their arms and surrendered in bodies of hundreds, if not of thousands; or to have scattered like frightened sheep, throwing away everything in their flight. Artillery, ammunition, and transport-waggons are said to have been likewise abandoned, and the advance of the victorious Federals is lighted by the burning stores of the Confederates. What is now left of Bragg's army is described as resembling a herd of terrified buffaloes, apparently incapable of further resistance." This is the picture drawn in

Northern journals of Bragg's retreat. In the jubilant despatches of Grant the same lines appear; and when we are also told that the Federal Generals Hooker and Sherman had carried the pursuit ten miles beyond Chicamauga Creek, it seems possible that the account may be nearly true. Nevertheless, there is so much obvious exaggeration in all this that we have no choice but to suspend our judgments for a time yet. All that remains clear in the confusion is that, unless Bragg retrieves his lost ground speedily, the Confederacy has suffered the heaviest blow of the year. Longstreet's operations against Burnside will probably go for nothing in that case, for if Grant is only half as victorious as he declares himself to be, he will have no difficulty in forcing Longstreet to raise the siege, and even, perhaps, of placing him in jeopardy in turn. It is true, the prospects of the Confederates appear brighter on the Potomac. Meade has advanced, it seems; and at the date of the last despatches there were rumours that he had been beaten. Whether this is so or not, we have a very strong belief that whenever he does meet Lee, on Lee's side of the river, he will be beaten; but, if all is true that comes from Tennessee, no victory that Lee could gain now would avail the Confederates much, unless it carried him into Washington itself. The Confederacy cannot afford to be beaten anywhere. It can scarcely afford to win a battle which is not decisive; and, if Grant has really



MUSHROOM-GATHERING.

routed Bragg, it will be no real compensation if Lee routs Meade. Upon the whole, affairs look very gloomy for the Southerners now; but we shall see what news the next steamer brings.

Meanwhile, affairs nearer home are troublesome enough to engage all our attention. More than once since the termination of the Crimean War we have been in alarm lest we should drift or be dragged into another conflict. Sometimes the panic grew very severe; but the crisis passed, and, now that that "feeling of uneasiness" which has never ceased in Europe since the Prince President of France became its Emperor has returned in force, we may reasonably hope for the best again. At the same time, we may be quite sure of this—the alliance between the two countries is at an end. Now, at first sight this does not appear to be a very serious catastrophe; but what we have to consider is, not what we may have lost by the dissolution of the *entente cordiale*, but what the Emperor loses, because he must necessarily make good the loss elsewhere, and that may be done eventually (otherwise it will never be thought to have been done effectually) at our expense. The alliance with England first gave the Emperor Napoleon his place amongst the Powers of the earth; and though from that place, which he had made so strong, he has lately assumed to dictate to Europe, he falls perceptibly to all the world when England breaks away from him with open rebuke. This is what has been done, and done so clumsily by the hand of Earl Russell that the injury to the pride of France, the blow to what is called the "prestige" of the empire and the Emperor, is without remedy, we think. It is not only that the Emperor, who must be everything or nothing, finds himself snubbed, but the whole country is raging under a sense of deep insult conveyed in that passage of Earl Russell's despatch which reminded France that it was easy to hold congresses in 1815, because she was then held innocuous under the heel of her conquerors. France will "vindicate" herself, we may be sure of that. The Emperor cannot remain sulking in his cabinet as if he knew he had been beaten; he must and will work to regain the position whence he has been so rudely pushed back; and if in so doing he can return upon England the humiliation she has brought upon him, it is only according to sentiment in France and poetical justice all over the world that he should do so. Not that we dread any direct or sudden quarrel. The Emperor works cautiously and slowly; he has other alliances to make first; and that, by-the-way, is unlucky for the unfortunate Poles, who really seem to be tricked and abandoned by Fortune at every turn. The best possible alliance for the French Emperor now is one with Russia; accordingly, Russia suddenly rises in the balance as an European State; and as she is assured that, unless France interferes in behalf of Poland nobody will, she may now pursue her rigorous policy there free from all apprehension of restraint or punishment. That is the way in which the lives and liberties of a people may be sacrificed through the jealousies of a Prince and the blunders of a despatch-writer. Apart from other considerations, some journalists profess to see in M. Fould's financial report a guarantee against immediate war. The report certainly shows that France has no more money to spare for projects of ambition or revenge; but only the most pedantic of politicians can find any security in that. A floating debt of £40,000,000 sterling, an annual deficit of a million and a half, are not pleasant conditions under which to commence a European war; but they would never prevent it. Our best guarantee for peace in that quarter is the certainty that France will no sooner begin unjust or suspicious hostilities anywhere in Europe than another coalition will be formed to check her.

MUSHROOM-GATHERING.

MUSHROOM-GATHERING is a more serious business than "Black-berrying," of which we said something a week or two ago, for it requires experience to distinguish the eatable from the poisonous fungus. The lucky selection of a spot where other naturalists have not been beforehand will ensure a pretty fair harvest, though much depends upon the condition of the soil, and upon its having been devoted to cattle grazing during the early months of the year. Of course our mushroom-gatherers, being only amateurs, will have nothing to do with those great Suffolk downs from which the farmers supply the fungi by wholesale for making catchup. There the mushroom crops are regularly cultivated, or at least every precaution is taken to favour their growth for the large consumption of the regular market, while great care is taken by the gatherers in their selection of the edible and their rejection of the poisonous fungi, the latter being in reality less numerous than the former, and easily detected after very little experience.

All fungi which have a strong or sickly odour are unwholesome; and, our noses having been given us to serve as advanced guards of our palates, fungi of this description will be found bitter in flavour and will parch the throat and mouth when they are tasted. To go from the nose and mouth to the eye—those which yield a sort of aromatic milky juice are generally injurious, and a rose or orange-red colour is a pretty sure indication of poison. Of this kind is that most deadly of toadstools, the "Fly Mushroom," which grows with a tall, straight stalk, bearing a large umbrella-shaped crown. The surface of this kind is ornamented with small white or yellowish dots, and, as it grows in pasture lands, it is very necessary to be aware of it in seeking for the true mushroom.

Another sort, also poisonous, is of a half-rounded shape and of a brownish yellow colour; it is generally discovered on manure heaps, and cannot be too carefully avoided. A third sort of toadstool is that commonest of bad fungi, the bright brown bulbous fellow (*Agaricus bulbosus*) which grows amongst the grass in the woods in the autumn season, and may be detected by its odour of horseradish. A very little observation and comparison will suffice for distinguishing the genuine mushroom from all these, and the localities in which they most abound differ from those which produce the poisonous kinds. The neighbourhood of water, and spots much shaded from the air and light, are not the places in which to look for wholesome mushrooms, which grow best in closely-fed pastures.

The appearance of the genuine mushroom, too, is quite distinct from that of the different varieties of toadstool.

When young, or in its "button" stage, both stalk and head are white and roundish; but as they grow larger the heads expand into the form of a nearly flat table, the curiously "pleated" gills on the under side being at first a pale flesh-colour, which gradually changes

to a dark brown as they increase in size. There are two peculiar properties of the mushroom—one, the liability of its degenerating into a poisonous fungus if planted near stagnant water or in a neighbourhood which is calculated to develop its bad properties; the other (shared by all vegetables of the fungus kind), its rapid growth. Everybody has seen those curious circles of little toadstools, known by the name of fairy rings, and regarded in the days before fairies had vanished from the world as the scene of the Elfín gambols by moonlight. These spring up in a single night, and the genuine mushroom grows, under favourable circumstances, with scarcely less rapidity.

Before leaving the subject, upon which a great deal might still be said, it would be well to point out the fallacy of an old opinion that poisonous fungi may be detected by using a silver spoon in cooking them. Whatever may be the properties of the vegetable poison, tarnishing silver is not necessarily one of them. The safest way of treating them, if any test is necessary, is to steep them in vinegar or in brine before dressing them. The old Greeks, who knew a good deal of a great many things, say, "Prepare your fungi with vinegar, salt, or honey, for thus you will rob them of their poison."

Foreign Intelligence.

FRANCE.

The replies of the Emperor of Russia and of the Kings of Saxony, Wurtemberg, Italy, Holland, and the Belgians to the invitation to attend the congress have been published by the French Government. The Russian reply is just what might have been expected—cordial in terms, professing an entire harmony of design with the French Emperor, and a readiness to join in the scheme, provided the consent of all the other great Powers can be obtained and the bases of discussion defined. In words, this is an acceptance; in fact, it is a rejection. The two German Kings express approval of the fundamental idea of the congress, but declare that they will be bound by the course which the Confederation of which they are members may resolve on taking. The King of the Belgians declares himself ready to lend all the weight of his Government to arrive at a pacific accord, "without prejudice to the means which may be agreed upon with the several States interested to obtain so noble an end." The King of Italy cordially and unreservedly accepts the invitation in his own name and in that of his people. He declares that there can be no harmony in Europe "until European order is constituted upon the basis of the principles of nationality and liberty, which are the very life of modern peoples." The King of the Netherlands expresses his readiness "to co-operate with all the other Sovereigns of Europe" in realising the object proposed in the circular of the Emperor. The views of the Vienna and Berlin Governments are substantially those of England—that is, they do not object to a congress, but wish to know what is to be done at it.

ITALY.

In the Chamber of Deputies on the 7th inst. a debate took place on the condition of Sicily, in which Signori Laporta and Bruno spoke against the Ministry. Signor Peruzzi stated that disorders had occurred and were much to be regretted, but that they did not exist throughout the island. Messina and Catania were in the best possible condition. Signor Peruzzi defended the authorities of the island, and said the prevailing insecurity was to be specially attributed to the old Bourbons, who at the moment of their fall opened the prisons. The Minister also defended the legality of the application of the law on brigandage in all the Southern provinces in which the law was necessary.

PRUSSIA.

The Prussian Government have demanded of the Chamber of Deputies a loan of 12,000,000 thalers to meet the expense of the proposed military execution in Holstein.

SWEDEN.

The Diet was closed on the 8th inst. with a speech from the Throne. His Majesty said:—"Our interests are not yet immediately threatened, but they are connected with the maintenance of peace and the rights of nations in Europe. The Swedish nation feels deep sympathy and sorrow for the dangers which impend over the King and people of Denmark."

THE SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN QUESTION.

The great topic of discussion in Germany is still the Danish question. In the Austrian Parliament Count Rechberg made a formal statement on the subject, which mainly corresponded with that delivered by Herr von Bismarck to the Prussian Chamber. Austria is not ready without mature consideration to countenance the Augustenburg claims. If Denmark will fulfil her part of the London Treaty, Austria is prepared to maintain her share of the engagements. Meanwhile, Austria is ready at once to take steps for the carrying out of Federal execution in Holstein. The Federal Diet of Frankfurt has at last passed the resolution for federal execution in Holstein. The order for the advance of troops into the duchy was immediately dispatched. Thursday last, the 10th inst., was named as the day on which the execution should take place, but no intelligence of the step having been taken has yet reached us. The Federal Diet has reserved the settlement of the questions relating to the succession in the duchies. The vote for execution was only passed by a small majority.

The Emperor of Austria received, on Monday, a deputation from the Municipal Council of Vienna, to present a petition on the Danish question. The Emperor rather snubbed the deputation. He told them it was unnecessary to state that he would fulfil all his duties as a member of the Germanic Confederation, and recommended them in future to direct their activity to the settlement of commercial affairs instead of discussing great political questions.

King Christian has issued a proclamation to the Holsteiners, declaring that he will put down insurrection of any kind, but will secure to Holstein her independent position. The Danish Government has withdrawn the Royal patent of the 30th of March—that which severed Holstein politically from the other members of the State. This step may have some effect in bringing about a conciliatory temperament, and leading to a compromise. A letter from Schleswig states that the fortifications of Dannevirke are now almost completed. The part which is intended to protect the position against an attack from the south is mounted with 200 guns.

It appears that on Sunday there were stormy scenes in some of the churches of Holstein. A great number of the pastors limited themselves to offering up the prescribed prayer for the "legitimate Sovereign," and so kept open a line of retreat to either camp. Pastor Hanson, of Wansbeck, who knew the temper of his people, prayed simply "for the King," without adding the name of Christian IX.; but, in spite of this precaution, a great tumult arose in the congregation, and several noisily left the church. In a church at Kiel, Pastor Ludeman prayed for King Christian IX., "on condition that he be recognised by the Germanic Diet!" The declaration was received by hisses and laughter. Everybody left the church, and the minister concluded his prayer in an empty building.

LORD NELSON'S COXSAIN. — Lord Nelson's coxswain on board the Victory, Mr. John Pringle, died at his residence, Newton Bushel, Devonshire, on Saturday last, having attained the extraordinary age of 103 years on the 19th of May last. The deceased veteran had only been ill about a month. Prior to his illness, although he was rather infirm, still his mental faculties were unimpaired, and he used to display those social qualities which so greatly distinguished him in early life. On his birthday for several years past he was in the habit of driving round the town, in company with his wife; and the old and respected couple were the observed of all observers. He was by birth a Scotchman, having been born in the county of Fife, and on attaining the age of twenty-one he joined the Royal Navy. While in the service he took an active part in many of our celebrated naval battles, and, among others, those of the Nile and Trafalgar. He had a pension granted him, and at the ripe age of ninety-two he married. His wife survives him.

THE CIVIL WAR IN AMERICA.

WAR NEWS.

The Confederates have sustained a severe defeat in Tennessee. It appears that General Grant had learned that General Bragg was retreating from his position in front of Chattanooga, the information being derived, as is stated, from deserters. Grant thereupon determined to pursue, but appears to have felt his way cautiously before attacking. On the 23rd he made a reconnaissance in force, by which he discovered that "the army of General Bragg was falling back towards Chickamauga." Assured of this movement, Grant resolved to advance his whole line, and attacked on the right and left of the Confederates. To defend these points Bragg seems to have weakened his centre, which a third attack broke through. Two Federal divisions were twice repulsed; but the field was abandoned by the Confederates, who retired to a position south of Missionary Ridge, leaving Lookout Mountain in the occupation of the Federals. The reports are all Northern and official; but the telegrams must have been "manipulated" more boldly than usual if these assertions are liable to future contradiction. The minor details, however, must be accepted with reserve. The number of prisoners said to have been taken by the Federals ranges from "five to ten thousand," figures too large and too round to be anything better than a guess or an exaggeration; and, as the Confederate retreat appears to have been commenced before the Federals discovered it, it may be doubted whether a corrected report will place "sixty cannon" among the captures, as it is alleged there are. On half the field the Confederates had no artillery, and on the other brought only a few light pieces into action—no more than sufficient to protect a retreat. The Confederates are reported to have thrown down their arms, and surrendered in bodies of hundreds, if not of thousands, or to have scattered like frightened sheep, throwing everything away in their flight. Artillery, ammunition, and transport-trains are said to have been likewise abandoned, and the advance of the victorious Federals was lighted by the burning stores of the Confederates, to which the torch had been applied to prevent them from falling into the hands of the enemy. What is now left of General Bragg's army is described as resembling a herd of terrified buffaloes, apparently incapable of further resistance. Generals Hooker and Sherman had carried the pursuit to ten miles beyond Chickamauga Creek. No rallying point had been reported as being fixed upon by General Bragg.

The latest despatch from General Grant is dated 10 a.m. on the 27th, and states that he was just in from the front; that the rout of the enemy was complete; that he believed General Bragg's losses in artillery would reach to sixty pieces; that a large number of Confederate prisoners had been captured, and that he should continue the pursuit to Red Clay, in Georgia, next day.

Complete accounts of the Federal losses have not yet been published, but the latest despatches prove them to have been much heavier than at first reported. General Sherman's division alone is admitted to have lost 500 killed and wounded.

Federal cavalry had destroyed the East Tennessee Railroad fifteen miles above and below Cleveland. This is said to isolate Longstreet from Bragg.

Despatches received from Cincinnati state that General Burnside held Knoxville up to eleven o'clock on Sunday morning. The siege still continued, but the Federal position was not so closely invested as had been reported. The Confederates, whose force was estimated at 36,000 men, had discontinued the attack from the south side of the river. General Burnside had notified the inhabitants that he intended to defend the town to the last extremity. The reverses to General Bragg, it is argued, would compel General Longstreet to raise the siege of Knoxville and retreat to Virginia. It was rumoured in Liverpool on Wednesday that General Longstreet had captured Burnside's army at Knoxville, but nothing authentic to this effect has been received. The report is probably suggested by the advance which took place in the price of gold in New York on the 28th ult.

General Meade crossed the Rapidan during the 26th and 27th at Jacob's, Germania, and Culpepper Fords, and advanced by three different routes, converging on the Orange Courthouse-road. The Confederates offered no resistance to Meade's passage of the river. Heavy cannonading was heard on the 27th near Orange Courthouse, lasting from morning till night; but no particulars of the engagement have been received. There were rumours in Washington that General Lee had made a counter movement, and crossed to the north side of the Rapidan, and destroyed General Meade's trains and communications; but they could not be traced to any authentic source. The Confederates had evacuated Fredericksburg heights. Lee's army was estimated to be 50,000 strong. His headquarters were at Orange Courthouse, with his line extending from White's Ford, on the left, to Mile Run, on the right. President Davis was at Orange Courthouse, and had reviewed the Confederate troops. General Mosby had made a dash upon Brandy Station on Thursday night, the 26th, and destroyed the Federal forage there, captured 139 mules, and destroyed or carried off between 30 and 40 waggon.

Accounts from Charleston to the 20th ult. report the seawall of Sumter to be entirely destroyed, and the bombardment still in progress. The Confederates were building bombproofs in the ruins. Letters from Folly Island now state that it is not the intention of General Gilmore to take possession of the site of Sumter, he being satisfied that he could not hold it, but to completely destroy its aggressive and defensive power. The monitor Lehigh, while on picket duty, on the 16th, grounded. A terrific fire was immediately opened on her by the Confederate batteries, and for a while her destruction seemed almost certain. The rest of the monitor fleet were sent to her rescue, and succeeded in towing her, in a damaged condition, out of range.

At midnight on the 24th a body of guerrillas made a descent upon a plantation occupied by freed slaves, six miles from Norfolk, Virginia, and succeeded in carrying off 100 of their number, and an extensive scout of the surrounding country by the Federals on the following day failed to effect a rescue or even to discover traces of the guerrillas.

GENERAL NEWS.

It is estimated that the expenditure of the Federal Government for the support of the War, Navy, and other departments, together with the interest upon the public debt, during the ensuing year, will amount to 800,000,000 dollars.

The "glorious news" from Chattanooga was made the subject of great congratulation by the clergymen of the different cities of the Northern States in their thanksgiving sermons on the 26th.

The *New York Tribune* affirms that President Lincoln will announce in his Message a plan for restoring the States to union, which will be in accordance with the furtherance of the emancipation proclamation.

John K. Statler, a contractor of supplies for the subsistence department of the army, had been found guilty by a court-martial of wilful neglect of duty in delivering an adulterated article, instead of pure coffee, to the department, and had been sentenced to five years' imprisonment in the Penitentiary. The President had approved the sentence.

The Confederate guerrilla General Morgan had escaped from prison in Ohio.

THE THAMES MARINE OFFICERS' TRAINING-SHIP.—Rear Admiral Lord Clarence E. Paget, C.B., M.P., at the request of the Committee of the Thames Marine Officers' Training-ship, has consented to distribute the prizes to the cadets, on board the Worcester, off Erith, on Monday, Dec. 14. The officers of the Royal Naval Reserve have expressed a wish to be present on board the Worcester on that day to receive his Lordship, and the committee of the training-ship have determined to give them every facility. This is the first opportunity his Lordship has had of meeting the officers of the Royal Naval Reserve since the formation of this very important volunteer force. A steam-boat, provided by the committee, will leave Blackwall Pier at 12.30 on that day to convey officers of the Royal Naval Reserve and others to the Worcester. Boats from the Worcester will be in attendance at Erith Pier to convey friends arriving by train leaving London Bridge station, North Kent Line, at 1 p.m.

THE SMITHFIELD CLUB CATTLE SHOW.

The Smithfield Club's Fat Cattle Show commenced at the Agricultural Hall, Islington, on Monday. In number of entries the show is the best which has yet been held under the auspices of the club, the cattle classes alone comprising 240 animals, or more than 60 in excess of last year. Taken as a whole, however, the animals exhibited are scarcely up to the mark of former years. The Prince of Wales, the Duke of Brabant, and the Crown Prince of Prussia visited the show in the morning, and at two o'clock it was thrown open to the public. Although the charge for admission was five shillings, the number of visitors was very large. On Tuesday and subsequent days, when the charge was one shilling, immense crowds visited the show.

CATTLE.

The Devons have come up with about their usual excellence. Mr. Robert Wortley's prize steer is a good beast, with some weight as well as quality about him; Mr. Heath's prize ox, a rare specimen of meat, well developed in all the best parts, covering an expanded frame upon fine bone. General Hood's second-prize ox, from the Royal farms, though splendidly fed, is too narrow in the hind-quarters of roasting beef, and some critics will prefer the Earl of Leicester's third-prize ox. Mr. John Overman's first-prize cow, "Fanny," is more like a model of what a Devon should be; Mr. Heath's second-prize cow, too lumpy with fat; and General Hood's third-prize cow, "Hyacinth," heavy, with splendidly firm, ripe meat.

The Herefords make a grand show, and seem determined to tread very closely upon the heels of the shorthorns. Last year was the glorification of the cross-breeds; this time both the chief honours have been won by pure breeds—the silver cup for the best ox or steer in the hall being won by a Hereford, and the silver cup for the best cow or heifer by a shorthorn. Mr. Heath's ox is extraordinarily full of good points, and one of the best animals exhibited of late years. Mr. Aldworth, Mr. Symonds, and Mr. Phillips also exhibit animals of considerable merit. The younger, or steer class, is not so commendable, the three prizes going to specimens of only moderate quality.

Shorthorns make a great feature in the hall. Mr. Baker's Birmingham gold-medal ox is here again the best male animal of his breed, though yielding the championship of the hall to the Hereford. Mr. Thompson's first-prize steer was only highly commended at Birmingham; and the Duke of Beaufort's steer, which won the third prize there, is here placed so low in the scale as to get no honour at all. Exceedingly good shorthorns are shown by Lord Radnor, Mr. Hulbert, Mr. Sisman, and Mr. Thompson. Mr. Swinerton's second-prize ox has many deficiencies in spite of its great frame and weight of flesh. Mr. Swaisland's very perfectly finished heifer, "Oakbud," which gained the gold medal as best female and the innkeepers' plate as best animal in Bingley Hall, here stands again without a rival, winning the silver cup as best female in the show. Mr. Stratton's strawberry heifer is very pretty, and Mr. Faulkner's third-prize heifer also of great merit. Three rare cows made a somewhat difficult task for the judges in their class. Mr. Lynn's very handsome but loosely-handling cow is here second, though first at Birmingham; Mr. Abbott's fairly third; and both eclipsed by Mr. Matthew's level, handsome, fine-boned "Beauty."

There is an extensive and capital show of the useful red Sussex cattle. Norfolk and Suffolk polls, about an average in quality. In the longhorn classes we have a considerable improvement in merit, though the number of entries is small. The Scotch cattle classes are exceedingly fine. Mr. Sneyd's West Highland (the Birmingham "best Scot") with red-brown shaggy coat and spreading horns, is one of the most extraordinary animals this breed has produced—one square, thick, wonderfully deep-framed carcass, all prime beef, as it were, almost to the hoofs. The Scotch polls are also exceedingly good—Mr. McCombie's great Aberdeen being first, and Mr. Heath's rare Galloway second—both placed as at Birmingham. Mr. Sewell Read shows a good Irish ox, and Mr. Bennett a very good Welsh runt. Among the cross breeds, the best are Mr. John Overman's large Devon and shorthorn, partaking of the latter character; and Mr. Allan Pollok's admirable cross between a shorthorn and Galloway. The classes of Extra Stock are very large, and so are some of the animals exhibited; but quality, rather than mere bulk, wins the palm. Mr. Birkbeck's Devon and Mr. Packe's white heifer taking the two prizes. Mr. Giblett shows a good Alderney, and Mr. Whitby a greater curiosity in the shape of a pretty red-and-white Brittany milker.

Reviewing all the cattle classes, we may characterise them as presenting few animals of the highest order of merit, and, while distinguished for general excellence, not carrying this superiority throughout—that is, the classes are good, but there are, unfortunately, several instances of plain and very ordinary butchers' beasts. Not every exhibitor seems to remember that we want economy in flesh, the best-grained roasting parts with a minimum of "weigh"—that we like our steaks juicy and tender, and not like pieces out of a portmanteau, "warranted solid leather."

SHEEP.

Coming now to the sheep, we find that the Leicesters are by no means numerous, though Lord Berners, Colonel Lowther, and Mr. Poljambe show pens of unusual character and quality. Never before in the history of the club have the Cotswolds cut so sorry a figure as on the present occasion; only two entries are made in the appointed class, and from these the prizes are very properly withheld. Mr. Porter partially saves the credit of the breed with a most noble and beautiful broad-back ewe in the class of extra stock. Mr. Cranfield, Mr. Marshall, and Mr. Codling exhibit some pretty good Lincolns; and the Romney Marsh sheep exhibit signs of considerable improvement.

Lord Walsingham is again conqueror among the Southdowns, carrying off the silver cup for the best Down sheep. Those three shearings weigh 49 st. 12 lb. (imperial) live weight; while the prize pen last year weighed 46 st. 5 lb. With about equal quality the Merton sheep combine greater substance. Lord Walsingham is also first in the class of sheep under 200 lb. in weight, second in the class of old sheep, and wins the silver medal in the extra-stock class of ewes. Both the Duke of Richmond's second-prize sheep and the Earl of Radnor's third-prize sheep in the two young wether-classes show very good breeding and high character of their respective flocks. The Goodwood first-prize old wethers are especially fine and well covered with mutton. Mr. Riden, of olden renown, is not a competitor, owing to his official position in the club this year.

Among the Hampshire and Wiltshire Downs, noted for their large proportion of lean meat, Mr. Canning's magnificent prize pen is by far the most meritorious. Some excellent sheep in this class might have been very well passed over, instead of honoured by the judges, if clipping animals into shape is to be discontinued.

The Shropshires are particularly good, but here some of the Birmingham decisions have been completely reversed. Mr. Henry Smith's splendid first prize shearings, with rare backs and legs of mutton, were only commended at Birmingham; while Lord Wenlock's second-prize sheep were first at Birmingham. And, again, neither Mr. Thorley's first-prize old wethers nor the Earl of Aylesford's second-prize sheep were even commended at Bingley Hall, while Mr. Foster's and Mr. Holland's first and second prize sheep at Birmingham are not noticed at all at Islington. The Shropshires also win the day in the extra-stock class.

The new Oxford breed is in small force, but the specimens are very fine, carrying great weights of good mutton and wool.

Among the cross breeds, so valued in a show of animals for the butcher, Mr. John Overman's Leicester and Down and several pens of Cotswold and Down are the most meritorious. In some cases the sheep are most unfairly trimmed, the fleeces manifesting an extraordinary power of accommodating the length of staple to undue prominences and depressions in the contour of the carcasses clothed.

PIGS.

The show of pigs is not more extraordinary than usual. General Hood's three white pigs, bred at the Royal Shaw Farm, which take

the gold medal against all comers, are certainly extraordinary for symmetry in their fatness; Mr. Morland and Sir Thomas Lennard's whities, and Mr. De la Rue's blacks, are of very great merit; and Mr. Stearn, Mr. Druce, the Countess of Chesterfield, Mr. Crisp, and other celebrated breeders exhibit pigs fairly representing the wonderful precocity and perfection which have been attained of late years.

IRELAND.

SEDITIONARY CARTOONS.—The Dublin *Nation* is publishing some political cartoons. The first one, issued a fortnight since, represented an eviction. The landlord was seen gloating over the work of devastation done by "the minions of the law," while in the foreground the ejected were shown preparing for emigration. This picture was called, "Going with a vengeance;" and this week's one is headed, "Coming with a vengeance." On a strip of land, supposed to be Ireland, John Bull is seen standing beside a lion, and holding a chain, to which is attached a female with a harp at her feet. She is looking imploringly, with outstretched arms, into the distance, where is seen General Meagher and an immense host of "Fenians" and Americans, with flags flying and cannons firing, advancing to her assistance. These doughty deliverers are represented in the uniform of the American army, and they carry the old flag of the States—the stars and stripes once more united—signifying that the expected aid will come from both North and South after their reunion; and also a banner with the harp and sunburst of Ireland. A great number of ironclads are also shown making their way to the Irish coast. John Bull, who is looking over his shoulder at the approaching invaders, wears a look of fear, and the lion has literally "turned tail" on them. The *Nation* was to issue this picture last week; but it is understood that it was withheld until to-day, in order that a legal opinion might be obtained as to the safety of publishing it.

SCOTLAND.

EXPLOSION OF POWDER-MILLS.—An explosion took place in the Kamer Powder-mills, Bute, on Thursday afternoon week. As usually happens in these cases, no one in the shed where the first explosion took place was left alive to tell how the explosion occurred; but in the present instance a suggestion has been started that the place had been struck by lightning. The explosion, beginning in one place, extended to another, till five sheds in all were blown up; but the workmen in three out of the five managed to escape before it reached them. Seven men in all were killed; and some trifling injuries were received by others, caused by the hurdling of the wreck through the air.

THE PROVINCES.

LANCASHIRE MECHANICS' INSTITUTES.—The distribution of the prizes to the pupils in the evening classes in connection with the East Lancashire Union of Institutes took place in the Townhall, Haslingden, on Saturday last. Colonel Wilson Patten, M.P., occupied the chair. The Marquis of Hartington, Sir J. K. Shuttleworth, Mr. Buckmaster (from the Kensington Museum), Alderman Wilkinson, Mr. Ercroft, and other gentlemen addressed the meeting. Resolutions were passed in favour of evening schools and classes. The hall was crowded, nearly 1000 persons being present.

THE PITMEN'S STRIKE IN THE NORTH.—On Tuesday forty-five of the families of the miners on strike at Messrs. Straker and Love's collieries, in the Auckland district, in the county of Durham, were ejected from their cottages at Oakeshaw. The proceedings were conducted in an orderly manner. The chance of any settlement with the union men is as remote as ever, as the firm has declared their intention not to employ union men. Brancepeth, Oakeshaw, Wellington A pit, and Brandon collieries are at work; and Willington B pit, it is hoped by the employers, will soon commence work.

DISGRACEFUL PROCEEDINGS.—For some time past the small church of Heighington, in the county of Durham, has been the scene weekly of the most disgraceful proceedings. It appears that a Mr. Blackin, a gentleman residing in the neighbourhood, recently sold some land to a wealthy farmer, and the latter has since claimed the right to a pew in Heighington Church, on the plea that it was attached to the land. Mr. Blackin disputed the claim, and the result has been a weekly contest, of the most unseemly character, between a man named Taylor, acting as the servant of the purchaser, and Mrs. Blackin and her daughters. On one of these occasions Mrs. Blackin ran a large shawlpin into Taylor, and in consequence, a summons for assault taken out by her was discharged. On a subsequent occasion, an attempt was made to turn Taylor out by force, and he thereupon laid an information for assault. The case came before the Darlington magistrates on Monday, when the summons was discharged, and on a counter summons Taylor was fined £3.

THE BODY OF A GENTLEMAN FOUND AT HASTINGS.—The body of a gentleman, who was apparently about fifty years of age, was discovered, on Tuesday morning last, lying on the beach at St. Leonard's, Hastings, and, from the appearance and marks of violence about the head and body, the gravest suspicions were aroused. A gold watch and several rings were found upon the body, besides five guineas in money. Through Mr. Hancock, of Bruton-street, the maker of the watch, the name of the gentleman was found to be Emile Alcan, a merchant, of 28, King-street, Chesham. An inquest on the body was subsequently held at the Terminus Hotel, St. Leonard's, when his managing clerk, Mr. William Arthur Castle, attended. He said there were no grounds whatever to suppose that deceased had committed suicide. He was in a very good position, and his business was in a flourishing condition. He was naturally cheerful, and nothing was known that had in any way disturbed his mind. He last saw deceased on Monday morning, shortly after eleven o'clock, at his place of business, when he told witness he had an engagement (he did not say where), and should be back by two o'clock, but he did not return. Thus it was conjectured, from this remark, that the deceased did not contemplate going to Hastings, nor had he any business engagement at Hastings to the witness's knowledge. The apparent marks of violence were accounted for in the medical evidence by the body coming in contact with sharp angular shingles, and the appearance of the skin showed that the deceased was alive when he fell in the water. A verdict of "Found drowned" was returned, with the addendum that the jury were perfectly satisfied there had been no foul play.

THE Dean of Lincoln, the Very Rev. Thomas Garnier, B.C.L., died at the deanery on Monday night, at the age of fifty-four years. The Dean had been an invalid for the last three years or more.

THE FIGHT BETWEEN KING AND HEENAN FOR £2000.—This fight, which has excited a considerable amount of interest of late, took place on Thursday morning at ten o'clock. A train started from London Bridge at ten minutes past six without any confusion, and reached Wadsworth station in about two hours. Wadsworth is a quiet place, about fifty miles from London and nine from Tunbridge Wells. Some time was lost in selecting a good spot and in discussing the eligibility of the referee. At last this gentleman's official services were accepted by both sides, and King pitched his bat into the ring amid loud cheers. The challenge was promptly taken up by Heenan, and the men stripped for their formidable work, displaying frames of enormous muscular development, although, from the pinched and worn appearance of their faces, it may be doubted whether they had not trained rather too fine. They soon got to work, and exchanged a few telling blows, when Heenan tried his famous hug and threw King, falling on him heavily. This kind of tactics was continued by the usual fall, Heenan upmost. So heavily did the peculiar kind of punishment tell on King that he was at one time carried to his corner in a state of partial insensibility, and was only revived by having his ear bitten by one of his seconds. But from the first he had all the best of the "out-fighting;" and, flinging himself upon Heenan, when the fight had almost been decided in favour of that personage, concluded the encounter with a series of rapid rounds, each of no more than a minute's duration. At last, by one crushing blow, he disposed of his antagonist's chance, and wound up the affair in twenty-five rounds and thirty-six minutes, knocking Heenan completely out of time.

MR. WARD BEECHER'S IMPRESSIONS OF ENGLAND.—Mr. Beecher arrived in New York on Nov. 16. On the following day he was present at the annual festival of the Sunday-school children of the Plymouth Church, and delivered a speech, in the course of which he said:—"My first experience of foreign travel was in Old England. We can all adopt the words, I think, of Cowper, and none so much as those who have been there: 'England, with all thy faults, I love thee still.' Nothing was more charming to me on leaving that arid ocean which some insane persons are pleased to praise—nothing struck me so much as the green fields, green trees, and exquisite lawns and plantations of England. And I wandered up and down through the midland counties, passing from east to west, as far as I had leisure and opportunity, with pleasure that knew no abatement, but that grew with the hours. Thence I went into France, by way of Havre. . . . When at last I struck the shore of England again, although I had received displeasure when I was there in the fore part of summer, I breathed free, and said, 'After all, thank God for England.' For there, with their rugged faults, with their wrongheadedness, with the many things that just at this crisis offend us, that is, in the national character—not that which is as among the French and many continental people, prepossessing and polished—but there is, after all, a foundation of truth and of manliness in the national character; and I felt that I came back among our own sort of men, though brought up under different circumstances and influences. I was glad to be back again in England; and, although my own reception there was rather equivocal, it did not make any difference; and I think that when I left England I liked her still better—not her wrongheadedness, not that corruption among her commercial classes which is the parallel of the corruption in our own country, in years past, by barbarous interests through slavery—but the better England. I appealed from England mis-informed to England better informed, and rested."

A HORRIBLE STORY.

THE following letter, describing a case of most atrocious and unnatural cruelty, which has occurred near Falmouth, appeared in the *Times* of Thursday morning:—

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—A circumstance so horrible that, but for the evidence of my own eyesight, I should scarcely have deemed it credible, has just been brought to light in a village near this town.

For some years past rumours have been current that the brother of a mason named Porter, living in comfortable circumstances, had been kept for many years in close confinement in a small room at the back of the premises in which Porter and his family reside. Heartrending cries and howls have been repeatedly heard by the neighbours, especially on cold winter nights; but, although the sympathy of many was aroused, no one deemed it his duty to inquire into the circumstances of the case, no one dreaming, probably, of the horrors that were to be revealed. Rather more than a year ago, Dr. Byrne, a well-known medical practitioner from the county of Durham, now residing in this town, was compelled to seek the warm climate of Falmouth for his health, and incidentally heard these rumours. Not satisfied to allow the matter to remain uninvestigated, he collected all the evidence he could, and was so satisfied that the case was one demanding a strict enquiry that, with a most praiseworthy decision, he communicated the facts to the Home Secretary, who at once appointed him special commissioner, and sent down two other commissioners, who, in company with Dr. Byrne, went to Porter's house on Thursday last, and demanded admission to his brother. Porter himself was absent, but, after some little parley with the other inmates, Dr. Byrne, who had obtained some slight insight into the plan of the premises, led the way through the house, across a yard and up a flight of steps, where they found a man, who they found a door, which admitted them to the den in which the lunatic was confined. The sight which met their gaze was too revolting to be described with all its horrid details. The place consisted of four bare, wet, plaster walls, with a small window on one side, and the door by which they had entered; a doorway opposite, formerly communicating with the house, was placed up, so as to cut off all communication, except by the flight of steps at the back. In one corner of the room was a wretched truckle bedstead, with cross pieces of wood, rotten with filth, about six inches wide, and the same distance apart. On these bare boards was crouched a being more resembling a baboon than a man, drawn and cramped, from long exposure and suffering, out of all form of humanity, stark naked, and with only two old rotten bags for a coverlet. I have said like a baboon, from the peculiar form into which the limbs were drawn; the knees almost touched the chin, and were pressed close down upon the chest, I imagine for warmth; the feet close together and bent down one over the other, also, I imagine, for warmth; the hands clinched and brought up close to the chin; the arms closely pressed against the sides. The knee and hip joints were ankylosed; the elbow-joints were also stiffening. The floor and the walls were one mass of accumulated filth, the floor rotten with it, and the stench horrible; and there are other circumstances of the case too dreadful for publication. For upwards of twenty years the tender mercies of his nearest relatives have consigned him to this living tomb—not a rag to lie upon, not even a wisp of straw; nothing but the naked body, and the two old bags to cover him.

Would a raving maniac be consigned to such a doom? God forbid! What, let us ask, is the mental condition of this poor wretch? Simply imbecile. A most mild, benevolent expression of countenance, a childlike submission to all that is done to him, no symptom of violence or even anger of any kind, and strong indications of intelligence in many things, even after these weary years of neglect and cruelty.

Yesterday, in company with Dr. Byrne and some friends, I visited the poor creature, for the purpose of getting a sketch of the remarkable position in which he had remained for so many years. The arrangements being then completed, two intelligent keepers from the county asylum washed, dressed, and took him away to that admirably-conducted establishment at Bodmin, where we fervently hope that both his mental and bodily condition may soon be improved. Of all the moving incidents of the case, not the least was the scene on emerging from the house. Many hundreds of people were collected round the conveyance, to which the keeper carried him in his arms like a child. "My God! Can that be a man?" "God bless you, Dr. Byrne!" were the exclamations that burst from the lips of the multitude. Few eyes were dry, especially when some who had known him when a strong intelligent youth pressed forward and shook him by the hand.

I am told the commissioners stated that in an experience of forty years they had never met with a case so awful. I trust, Sir, you will give it prominence in your columns, for the terrible reflection forces itself upon us, when we see of what humanity is capable, that this case may not be singular. Are there any other similar rumours of cruelty that demand investigation?

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
SYDNEY HODGES, Secretary of the Royal Cornwall Polytechnic Society.

Falmouth, Dec. 7.

THE LATE GALES.—The following is a list of services rendered by the boats of the National Life-boat Institution during the fearful gales of last week:—Barque Ina, of North Shields, 14 men saved; ship David White Clinton, of New York, 8; fishing-boat, of Tenby, 3; schooner Margaret and Jane, of Dublin, 5; barque Duke of Northumberland, 18; fishing-boat, of Fife, 2; schooner Economy, of Portland, saved vessel and crew of 5; lugger Vigil, of Peel, saved vessel and crew of 4; ship Jupiter, of London, 8; schooner Maria, of Alnwick, 4; schooner Henry Russell, of Glasgow, saved vessel and crew of 6; schooner L'Esperance, of Nantes, 2; schooner Elizabeth, of Whitehaven, 4; barque Elizabeth Morrow, of Glasgow, 19; barque Confidence, of Liverpool, 23—total, 125—making a grand total of 352 lives saved by the life-boats of the institution during the present year alone. Besides these services, the life-boats of the society at Walmer, Eastbourne, Aberswith, Bude Haven, Southport, St. Ives, Lytham, and Fishguard put off on Thursday and Friday last, in reply to signals of distress, with the view of saving life from various vessels; but they were not afterwards required. These services are often attended with as much danger as when the life-boat brings a shipwrecked crew ashore, the gallant men who man the boats oftentimes being thoroughly exhausted. Indeed, in the case of the Walmer life-boat, the crew were out eleven hours, and returned home nearly perished with cold. Altogether, nearly 14,000 lives have been saved from various wrecks since the first establishment of the Life-boat Institution, for which it has granted rewards. A boat of its great life-saving fleet, now numbering 125 boats, is found on nearly every dangerous point of our coast where they can be efficiently worked. As each life-boat requires about £50 a year to keep it up effectively, it will at once be seen that a large annual sum is indispensable to the institution's continued progress in its good work.

LIFE-BOATS FOR THE NAVY.—The importance of having all our men-of-war fitted with at least one life-boat, if not more, is a question which has long occupied the attention of those scientific officers who form the progressive party in our Navy. To the mere looker-on it will appear an almost inexplicable fact that any of our men-of-war ever went to sea without life-boats after they were once invented, especially since they have been brought to such complete perfection by the National Life-boat Institution. The duties which men-of-war crews have suddenly to fulfil—to pick up men overboard in stormy weather, to land important despatches through any surf, and at almost any risk to render hazardous service to our wrecked merchantmen in the wildest and least civilised parts of the world—any and all of these duties may come upon them in a single day, and day after day, and have to be rendered in boats which are not only not fit, but are the worst fitted, for such purposes. The reason why our men-of-war have not been so fitted is that to this day a good life-boat for service on board ships—that is, one easily stowed, light to raise and lower, simple in its fittings, and strong enough to defy the rough usage of the most careless sailors—is yet to be designed. The boats of the National Institution—which now, fortunately, are to be found in most parts of the world and all round our coasts—are far too large for such a purpose; but the Admiralty, now seriously anxious to provide all cruisers with small life-boats, have asked the officers of the institution to give plans and superintend the building of a life-boat suitable for a man-of-war, but not to exceed one ton in weight. A few days ago a trial was made with two such boats in the Regent's Canal Docks, London, in the presence of the Lords of the Admiralty and a number of officers interested in the solution of this most important nautical question. One of the boats tried was 32 ft. long by 8 ft. 10 in. extreme width, capable of holding on an emergency as many as seventy persons, and of accommodating with ease forty-five or fifty. This boat, however, weighed 37 cwt., or very nearly double what is considered should be the maximum for a handy and useful boat for sudden emergencies. The second boat was 30 ft. long by 7 ft. 4 in. wide, and weighed only 22 cwt. This would stow with ease twenty-five persons, and could take off thirty-five at a pinch. It seemed evident, however, that the Admiralty, in fixing the maximum weight at one ton, have adopted a standard which it will be found very difficult to comply with so as to make a really efficient craft for all weathers. The boats were canted over to the water's edge in every way, and the largest, when emptied, was turned over by means of a hydraulic crane, and, though in the still water of the docks it did not actually right itself, it remained on its side sufficiently buoyant to enable the men to turn it on its keel easily. In dense sea water, and especially in sea water with any swell in it, there is very little doubt that it would have righted of itself almost immediately. When it did right, the relief tubes in the bottom, which were opened, allowed the whole load of water in it to run off in less than a minute. The small boat, though not tested with this severity, was sufficiently proved to show that even when heavily laden with sailors, and with the relief tubes opened, it was still buoyant and as seaworthy as ever. The result of the trials seemed to show that if the Admiralty will only allow a slight addition of weight to their present standard—say from 20 cwt. to 25 cwt.—a perfectly efficient life-boat, fit for any duty in any weather, may easily be obtained.

We regret to state that intelligence has been received from York announcing the serious illness of Mr. Justice Wightman. His recovery appears to be despaired of.

THE SHAH OF PERSIA.

ZIL ALLAH, the Shadow of the Almighty, Viceregent of Omnipotence, Most Lofly of Living Men; the Source of Majesty, whose throne is the stirrup of heaven; Equal of the Sun and Brother to the Moon and Stars; Object of the Vows of Mortal Men, Master of Destiny, Emperor of All Corporeal Beings and Centre of the Universe. These are a few of the titles of the Shah of Persia, whose Portrait, executed in the stiffly severe style of Persian art, has been sent as a present to the Sultan, and is reproduced in our Engraving. Notwithstanding all these titles, however, and the empire of a powerful kingdom, there are few monarchs in whom less direct interest seems to be centred.

A quarter of a century ago, the attempt to march against Herat, and the consequent interposition of the British Government, brought Shah Mahmoud Dadi Shah rather prominently into European politics; and the recent disturbances in the district, which threatened the same city, have been the occasion of his successor appearing for a short time in the columns of the English newspapers as having provided an army of occupation in case of its being required in the disaffected territory. The Portrait which we publish represents the Shah in his high official costume. Ordinarily he dresses rather plainly, and is remarkable for a look of deep penetration and, at the same time, an expression of weariness. His tastes, as regards amusements and mode of life, are, perhaps, more French than Persian, since he retains only the necessary customs, without which he could scarcely hope to gain the goodwill of the genuine Persian people, amongst whom change is equivalent to disgrace. Twice a day the Shah is expected to show himself to his people; and these occasions are plain and commonplace enough, since he has merely to come out from the palace and sit for a few minutes in an armchair—perhaps receiving one or two persons who desire to be presented to him, and who have been able to make sufficient interest to obtain so high an honour. On great State occasions, however, the wealth and luxury which have always distinguished the Persian Court are more fully exhibited. Then are displayed those magnificent crown jewels which would buy a kingdom, and are unequalled even by the "musnud" upon which he sits, and which seems to be built of all kinds of precious stones. There is an overpowering wealth of diamonds, rubies, and pearls glittering upon and around the Shah, since to him alone belongs the privilege of wearing jewels upon these occasions; and pearl-embroidered cushions, gemmed pipes, and gold and silver dishes holding the loose jewellery of his Majesty, make up a picture of rather too prominent splendour. The compliment paid by the Shah to the new Sultan in conveying to him his portrait is perhaps a guarantee of those friendly relations which are ne-



THE SHAH OF PERSIA.

cessary between Persia and Turkey for the proper regulation of Koordistan and the mutual protection of their respective frontiers.

but the influences which surround the heir to the throne of Persia will, it is to be feared, have an unfortunate effect on this early amiability of character.

On the recent arrival in Persia of Mr. Alison, the British Minister to the Court of the Shah, he was received with all the barbaric splendour which so especially belonged to the Persia of the ancient time.

A whole legion of Persian functionaries went out to meet him, followed by a perfect troop of led horses, splendidly caparisoned, and 200 mounted gholaums, all gaudily dressed and armed, their horses being, if possible, more splendidly brilliant than themselves. To these were added the English Consul-General and a goodly company of British protégés—for they still "protect" largely in Azerbidjan—all in their fullest holiday finery.

Half way in, a large tent was spread for his Excellency's reception, and there the party halted and partook of the usual Persian refreshments—calouns, tea, sweetmeats, and sherbet. These over, the journey in was resumed, and the cavalcade made its "solemn entry," amid nearly as much dust, hubbub, turning out of guards, and all the other et ceteras of official honour, as if Nusereddin Shah himself had been there in bodily presence.

The great officer of State, the Sirdar, who acts as a sort of Governor to the Heir Apparent, gave some days afterwards a grand entertainment in honour of the returned Minister. The dinner on the occasion was excellent, being a happy mixture of native and European dishes, and served up with the infidel accompaniments of knives and forks and excellent wine. The host's garden, one of the best in Tabreez, was brilliantly illuminated; fireworks, too, were let off in startling abundance, and a military band discoursed the loudest music.

One of the greatest attractions of the evening was a celebrated native tenore, who frequently sings before the Shah, and who on this occasion rendered a variety of native airs and recited choice poems of Hafiz and Saadi, on the whole not unpleasantly. The scene was Oriental in every detail, and in none more, perhaps, than in the fact that the giver of the feast enjoys practically unlimited power of life and death—a right, too, which is no dead letter in his hands. He can, and does, strangle, behead, chop off limbs, torture, and blow up (with gunpowder) as many of the Shah's lieges in his province (that of Tabreez) as he likes. With all this, however, he is "as mild a manner'd man as ever cut a throat"—in fact, a perfect type of a Persian gentleman, and a very agreeable companion to those who are not subject to his power.

His charge, the Heir Apparent, is a very pretty, bland, intelligent-looking boy, with fine, regular features—quite a type, in fact, of his Royal Kandjar race. His natural disposition is said to be excellent; but the influences which surround the heir to the throne of Persia will, it is to be feared, have an unfortunate effect on this early amiability of character.



POLISH INSURGENTS LYING IN WAIT TO INTERCEPT A RUSSIAN DETACHMENT.

THE RUSSIANS IN POLAND.

It would convey little information to our readers, and perhaps have little interest for them, to report in detail the encounters which are stated to take place from day to day between the Russians and the Poles, as these encounters occur under leaders we know little or nothing about, at places rarely heard of before, and seemingly have no positive effect on the course of events. From Polish sources we have accounts of skirmishes in which the insurgents are said to have been victorious; from Russian sources we get reports of the destruction of this or that band, and reiterated assertions that the insurrection is being crushed; but as invention, or at least great exaggeration, characterises the statements of both sides, it is impossible to distinguish truth from falsehood. It seems certain, however, that while the "gros bataillons" are on the side of the oppressors of the unhappy Poles, the latter are animated by a spirit and determination deserving of the highest respect, and meriting a better chance of ultimate success than seems likely to crown the efforts of this heroic people. The struggle, in fact, appears to be assuming the form of a guerrilla warfare, in which the Polish bands, unable to cope with their opponents in the field, watch for opportunities, pounce upon isolated detachments of Russians, and either destroy or inflict considerable damage upon them. Our Engraving represents a band of insurgents engaged in an enterprise of this kind, and waiting to make a dash at a Russian detachment, of which, probably, they gave a good account.

Meantime, we learn that the "National Polish Government continues to display great energy in the organisation of its forces. The detachments are numerous and well armed. Many corps are in course of formation, and it will not be long before they are in the field. It is not merely with the object of making the insurrection last till the spring that the people fight; the possibility of an intervention is now only regarded as a happy chance of sparing Poland thousands of victims. But, intervention or no intervention, fighting will be carried on to the last extremity. It is not one class of society alone, but the entire nation which wills it. The volunteer corps recently organised are composed almost entirely of peasants. The martyrdom of so many eminent victims, massacred by the Russians, has borne its fruits. Formerly it was sometimes asked with anxiety who would continue the struggle when the nobility and the middle class had succumbed? That fear is no longer felt; those who die will have thousands of successors. Of 180,000 inhabitants, Warsaw contains only 150,000 at this moment. Twenty-nine thousand inhabitants lost in eight months! Twenty-nine thousand men,



CHRISTIAN IX., KING OF DENMARK.

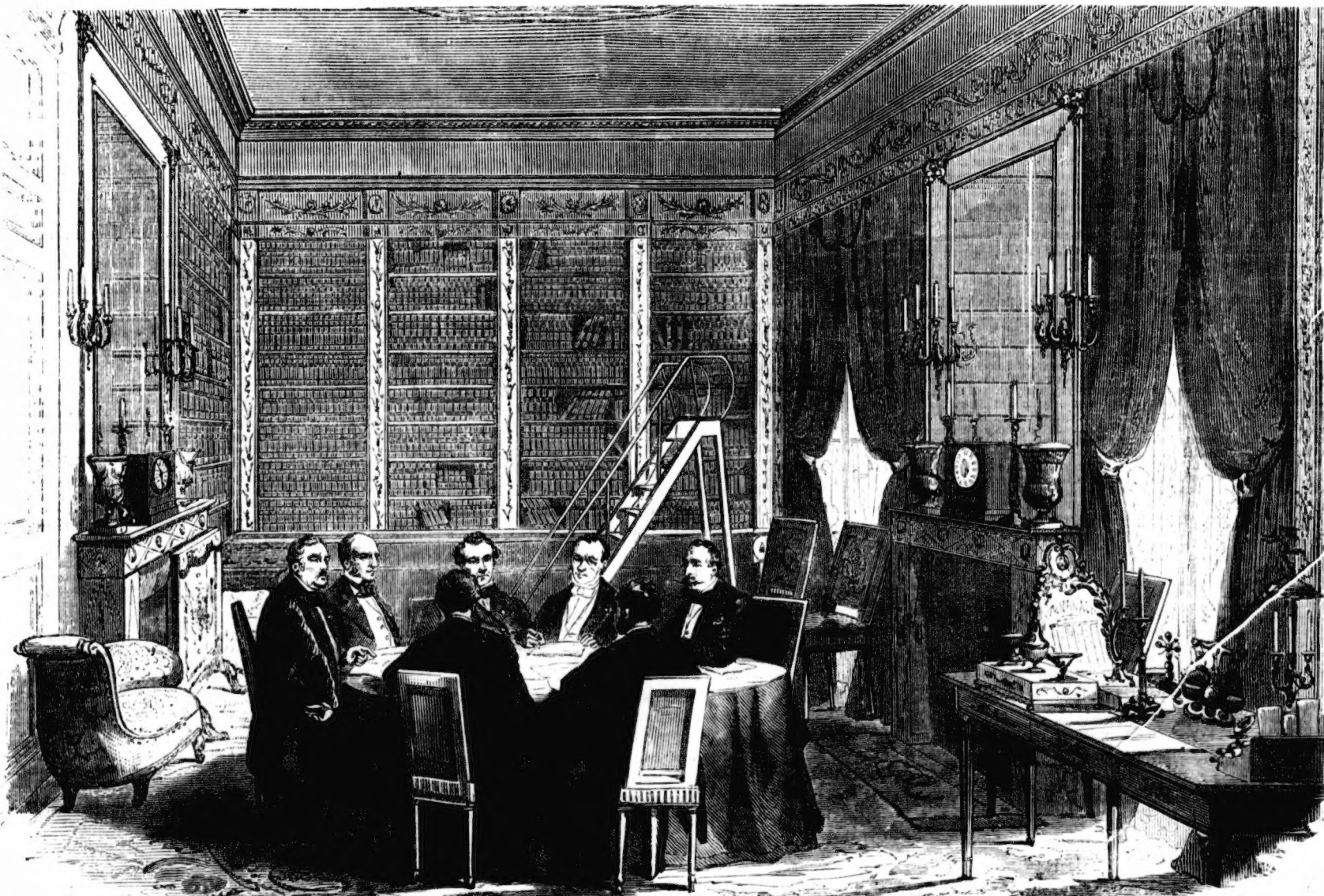
women, and children, for the most part tortured in the dungeons, transported into Siberia, or executed on the glacis of the citadel! The Russians hoped in this vast haul to take the members of the National Government. Doubtless, amongst so many victims more than one belong to that admirable secret organisation; but these losses have not enfeebled it. The most perilous employments are those most sought for. Unknown men, often workmen, reveal every day an unlooked for energy and capacity. All the living strength of the nation is concentrated on one object—*independence*. Russia will probably not suppress the insurrection save by exterminating Poland."

The cruelties perpetrated on the Poles by the Russians continue unabated in intensity, and the state of the political prisoners in the various gaols is miserable in the extreme. Mr. F. L. M. Anderson, an Englishman, who was apprehended along with a young Polish nobleman, his friend and pupil, without the slightest ground for suspicion, against whom no positive charge was ever made, and who were imprisoned in a convent converted into a gaol, and which Mr. Anderson describes as one of the best in the country, gives the subjoined account of his treatment while in custody. It may be mentioned that Mr. Anderson was refused permission to communicate with his friends or with the British Consul, and that it was only by accident that two Englishmen travelling in the country became aware of his position, and by the interference of our Ambassador at St. Petersburg, Lord Napier, obtained his release. As for his friend and companion in misfortune, nothing whatever is known as to his fate, and the probability is that he is either still enduring the horrors of incarceration or has been sent off to Siberia along with hundreds of others equally innocent. Describing his imprisonment, Mr. Anderson says:—

"The prison in which I was confined at Grodno for four days was the best of the three in that town, being reserved for the upper class of political offenders; and, if this is the best specimen, what must the others be?"

"The building had been formerly a convent, and contained when I was taken to it more than 400 prisoners, among whom were several ladies. My cell was spacious enough; but, as its single window was high and boarded up, it had little light and still less means of ventilation. The floor was abominably filthy; a nuisance left in the cell by a former prisoner was still there; and, when I made signs to the Cossack turnkey to have it removed, he only grinned and shook his head.

"My bed and mattress (stuffed with pigs' bristles) swarmed with vermin. On my petitioning for clean sheets, they were supplied, it is true, but of the roughest and coarsest texture. My food the first night was black bread



THE EMPEROR OF THE FRENCH PRESIDING AT A COUNCIL OF MINISTERS IN THE LIBRARY AT COMPIEGNE.

and greasy water-gruel of a most unsavoury odour, which I was unable to taste, and which the next morning had become intolerable. The gruel was followed the next day by soup, quite cold, with a piece of sodden meat. In fact, the food set before me at Grodno was so unpalatable that even the force of urgent hunger failed to make me consume it.

"I did not enter either of the prisons in the town; but from the information of the prisoners in one of them, which was an old church, I learnt, and have no reason to doubt the veracity of my informants, that no separate rooms or beds were allowed in any part of the building; that straw, indeed, was given to the inmates to lie upon, but that they were all huddled together like pigs in a sty, and that no egress even for the shortest time was allowed for any purpose to any one."

The special correspondent of the *Times* has been "invited" to leave Warsaw, and was only permitted to proceed to St. Petersburg on condition that he should go there direct, and on no account stop at Grodno, Wilna, or any other place in Lithuania, lest, we suppose, he should see and report matters not over creditable to General Mouravieff, who rules so ruthlessly in that wretched province. The most minute precautions were adopted to make sure that the correspondent did leave Warsaw as ordered, and did not have any opportunities of making observations on his journey. The system of government which cannot stand the scrutiny of an honest, intelligent, and conscientious observer like the gentleman in question, must have in it something very rotten indeed.

THE KING OF DENMARK.

THE family history of Christian IX., the new King of Denmark, has become well known to us because of his relationship to our Princess of Wales, and it is mainly in consequence of the connection which he has thus formed with our own Royal family that we are sorry for the dangers and difficulties of his present position.

The great Schleswig-Holstein difficulty, which has so long been an enigma to all Europe, may now be solved; and its amicable arrangement depends greatly upon the temper and judgment of the King of Denmark. The difficulty as it at present stands seems to be as follows, according to the text of the petition presented to the Federal Diet by the members and deputies of the Holstein Estates.

With the death of King Frederick VII. the elder branch of the Oldenburg family is extinct. According to the verdict of the most eminent statesmen, the Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Augustenburg line is the nearest to the throne in the duchies of Schleswig-Holstein. By virtue of a Danish law of succession, however, enacted on the 31st of July, 1853, in the Copenhagen Parliament, the Crown of the duchies, as well as the kingdom, is to devolve on Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg and his male descendants by Princess Louise Wilhelmina of Hesse. The law being based on the well-known London agreement, the Prince has now ascended the Danish Throne under the name of Christian IX. However, as the legitimate succession in a German country cannot be altered by an agreement among other European Powers, so the London compact cannot possess this right, the Powers merely engaging to recognise the succession of Prince Christian and his descendants, without undertaking a guarantee for the same. At any rate, no lawful succession can be altered without the country assenting to the arrangement—a principle enforced at all times, and acted upon in the many cases in which a new dynasty has been established in the memory of the living generation. The Danish Government itself acknowledged the consistency of the principle in submitting the law of succession to the Danish Parliament, and publishing it after its due and constitutional sanction by the House. But the assent of the duchies and their Parliamentary assemblies—Estates—has not been so much as asked for, an omission repeatedly animadverted upon in the protests of the constitutional body. Furthermore, the Augustenburg line, so far from resigning their rights, have opposed the London treaty, and publicly protested against the law of succession based upon it. All these circumstances are aggravated and supported in their bearing upon the case by the fact that, in consequence of the Federal vote of Feb. 11, 1858, the introductory paragraphs of the Holstein Constitution, as well as the common constitution of the monarchy, so far as Holstein is concerned, have been abolished by Government. Of these introductory paragraphs, clause 1 expressly refers to the new law of succession as securing the permanent union of Holstein with the Danish monarchy. For this reason it is argued that, if the abolition of the Charter is demanded by the Federal Diet on the grounds of its not having been submitted to the constitutional representatives of the country, the same reason holds good with regard to Schleswig as is applied to Holstein. Meanwhile, Prince Frederick of Augustenburg, who has returned to Gotha, is keeping up a sort of Regal Court there; and offers of loans are, it is said, already pouring in upon him on very profitable terms—to the lenders.

A MINISTERIAL COUNCIL AT COMPIEGNE.

THE present state of political parties in France, the necessity for reorganising the army in Mexico, and, above all, the debates on the replies of the countries which were invited to the great European congress, call for frequent meetings of the Ministers of State with the Emperor during his temporary residence at Compiègne.

These consultations, one of which is represented in our Engraving, are most frequently held in the library, which is the favourite Imperial workroom, and the furniture of which possesses a sort of historical value as having belonged to Louis XVI., and was very religiously preserved as the relics of a martyr by Louis XVIII. These, including the inkstand, the hand-bell, and other articles of ordinary library use, are displayed on a side-table; and the collection has been increased by several nick-nacks, mostly amateur manufactures, formed of Crimean and other relics, which are amongst the fancies of the present Emperor.

THE NEW MEMBER OF THE INDIAN COUNCIL.—Sir Charles Wood has nominated Sir George Russell Clerk, K.C.B., K.S.I., a member of the Indian Council, in the room of the Right Hon. Sir John Lawrence. Sir George Clerk, born at Shawford House, Hampshire, in 1801, is the eldest son of Mr. John Clerk, of Listonshields, N.B., and Bownham House, Gloucestershire, by the second daughter and coheir of Mr. Carew Midway, of Shawford House. After an education at Haileybury he entered the Bengal Civil Service in 1816. He has been political Agent on the Bengal frontiers, Envoy at the Court of Lahore, Lieutenant-Governor of the north-west provinces of Bengal, and Governor of Bombay. For his services in these high offices, extending from 1830 to 1848, he received the honour of K.C.B. Subsequently he became assistant to the High Commissioner for adjusting the affairs of the South African territories, and Special Commissioner for the affairs pertaining to the Orange River settlement (April, 1853). From 1856 to 1858 he was Under Secretary to the Board of Control, and in the latter year he was appointed, under the new Act of Parliament, Under Secretary of State for India. He was reappointed Governor of Bombay in April, 1860, but returned, in consequence of ill health, in the March following. In 1861 he received the distinguished honour of the Star of India.

THE INDIAN TELEGRAPH.—Colonel Stewart, Sir Charles Bright, Captain Stewart, Mr. J. C. Laws, and Mr. F. C. Webb have arrived at Malta in the steam-ship *Valetta*, from Marseilles, and passed on in the same vessel for Alexandria, for the purpose of superintending the laying of the electric cable in the Persian Gulf. The five ships forming the squadron for conveying the cable to its destination will rendezvous at Bombay, whence they will proceed to lay their respective sections. The submergence of the cable is to commence as soon as possible after their arrival. The staff of electricians, telegraphists, &c., have been sent in the various cable-ships, all of which have left England, and the early ones must now be near Bombay. The submarine line will be laid in four sections between Bussorah, at the head of the Persian Gulf, and Kurrachee, having intermediate stations at Bushire, Khasab, and Gwadel. The land line from Bussorah to Bagdad, and thence through Asia Minor, is being proceeded with all possible dispatch. The persons connected with the undertaking who passed through Malta said that they expected to have the line in working order within six or seven months from the present time.

THE LATE ACCIDENT AT ISLINGTON.—The adjourned inquest on the sufferers by the fall of the Three Wheatsheaves Tavern at Islington took place on Monday. Several men were examined who had been engaged upon the works. From their testimony it was clear that there were signs beforehand of the giving way of the building. How it happened that all the workmen were not warned to get away from danger is not yet explained. Neither is it shown what was the cause of the accident. The inquest was adjourned to Monday next.

On SATURDAY NEXT, December 19, will be issued, Price 4d., THE CHRISTMAS NUMBER AND SUPPLEMENT OF THE ILLUSTRATED TIMES.

ENGRAVINGS.

A Christmas Party: Arrival of the Rich Uncle from whom the Family have Expectations.
Under and Over the Mistletoe.
How the Pawnbroker's Boy spends his Christmas Eve.
A Young Beau Dressing for Dinner.
Christmas Roasters a Century ago.
National School Children's Christmas Treat.
The Cabman and the Christmas Goose.
Grandmamma's Pet.
The Bull Inn, Aldgate, on Christmas Eve in the old Coaching Days.
The Robins.
A very Jolly Christmas Eve.
How Mosses Gogo Spent his Christmas Day in London: Twenty Tableaux.

ARTICLES.

A Christmas Party, minus the Mystic Influence.
Both Beheaded—Both Innocent. A Tragic Story.
The Poet's Christmas Retrospect.
The Legend of Shadow-Tree Shaft. A Mining Story.
The Light at the Window.
The Christmas Prospects of our Poor Relations.

TO ADVERTISERS.—Advertisements for the CHRISTMAS NUMBER of the ILLUSTRATED TIMES cannot be received after WEDNESDAY next, the 16th.

NOTICE TO CONTINENTAL RESIDENTS.—Mr. Ludwig Denicke, Leipzig, has been appointed our special agent, whose terms of Subscription at Leipzig are 4 Thaler 20 Groschen per year; 2 Thaler 10 Groschen per half-year, including all Double Numbers.

ILLUSTRATED TIMES.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1863.

SUCCOUR FOR THE DESTITUTE.

It is a curious subject for reflection that, where the community is unanimous in affirming a principle, the practical application of such a principle is not unfrequently postponed indefinitely. Where, on the other hand, there exists great diversity of opinion upon a theoretical matter, a majority of those in power carry their views into practice with promptitude and decision. Our system of relief of the poor exhibits a remarkable instance in point. When the code now known as the New Poor Law was under discussion, it furnished one of the gravest of the questions which, some thirty years since, engendered bitter political and class animosities in England. The "Radicals," under which title might then have been ranged almost every Englishman whose position was below that of the wealthier middle rank, or not one of subservience to aristocratic domination, looked upon the bill as nothing better than a scheme for subjecting the poor to novel and cruel tyranny. On the other hand, the supporters of the bill regarded it as a soundly-based experiment in political economy, by means of which it was hoped to abolish beggary by elevating it into pauperism. In spite of such opposition as could then be commanded, in spite of fierce denunciations by popular leaders, of minacious demonstrations on the part of the body of the people, the bill became law. The poor were delivered over to their tormentors in the form of boards of guardians, with their satellites of beadles, workhouse masters, relieving officers, and janitors. Ever since that time the cry of the poor has gone forth against the system, which has been assailed in turn by journalists, preachers, satirists, philanthropists, and thinking men of every shade of political opinion. Now, no week passes without its record of some enormity perpetrated under cover, or by reason of, the poor law. The wretched perish in the streets, perpetrate offences to procure the pleasant alternative of the gaol, and even commit suicide rather than encounter the miseries and privations of the poor-house. There is perhaps no class in the nation, except the members and underlings of the boards whose "twopenny Parliament" furnishes them at once with authority and excitement—which does not condemn the system, even to execration. But it remains unchanged.

On the other hand, all appear unanimous in maintaining the principle that, at least, nightly food and shelter should be, in a wealthy land like ours, the accessible right of every one, no matter how worthless, idle, or even criminal, since it is provided even for the vilest inmates of our prisons. The Legislature has passed an Act to carry the principle into effect; but the Act still remains unadministered, and the appropriately-named "casual" ward of the workhouse offers the only barren chance of shelter to the perishing outcast. A plot of ground in each district, with a shed, a modicum of straw, and a keeper to preserve order, is all that is required to prevent the nightly scenes of houseless wretchedness in the parks, on the steps of the workhouses, in mews, under archways, and beneath the very portals of the wealthy.

But there still remains the requirement of food. It is small use to offer a "shake down" to the starved wretch whose temporary doze is only a dream of a feast, and who awakes only to a gnawing of the vitals. And upon this point we would humbly beg to offer a suggestion which to us appears perfectly feasible, and to require nothing but a simple organization to carry into beneficial effect. It is simply the economization of waste.

There is scarcely a household above the poorest in which there is not at present an amount of waste painful to contemplate. Cold scraps, remnants of stale bread, the remains of feasts, are the superfluities of even the best-managed establishments. In ancient days these furnished the ordinary contents of the beggar's poke, wallet, or "budgeon." Now, if not consigned to the dog or the dusthole, but distributed as alms, the giver may either find them thrown away in contempt by the recipient impostor at the corner of the street, or he will discover that his charity brings upon him a constant succession of importunate applicants and permanent pensioners. What we

would earnestly recommend is the utilisation of this "waste." In connection with every refuge, let one or more authorised officers be appointed for daily house-to-house visitation of all who may be able and willing to spare a residue for the poor. Nor need this be subsequently dispensed as a cold, miserable, fragmentary banquet. A boiler, with fire and water, a few vegetables, and a small quantity of condiment, will perform miracles in the way of wholesome conversion of distasteful food. The gipsy's cauldron, the sailor's "lobscouse," the Spanish "olla podrida," the French "pot-au-feu," the old English hodge-podge, or hot-pot (whence the phrase "pot-luck"), all illustrate the manner in which heterogeneous viands may be economically converted into a feast at once savoury and nutritious.

SAYINGS AND DOINGS.

THE KING OF THE GREEKS has written to congratulate his father on his accession to the throne. The letter commences with the usual formula among crowned heads, "Monsieur mon Frère."

LORD WODEHOUSE has proceeded to Copenhagen to congratulate King Christian IX. on his accession to the throne.

MR. CONINGHAM, M.P., it is rumoured, is about to retire from the representation of Brighton in consequence of ill health.

LORD ELGIN was still alive up to the 17th ult., though little hope of his recovery was entertained.

THE FLOATING ISLAND has again made its appearance on Derwent-water.

A ROYAL NAVAL COLLEGE will, it is confidently expected, very shortly be reared on some salubrious point of the coast of England.

THE NEW VICEROY OF INDIA took his departure from this country on the 10th inst. Dr. Charles Hathaway, well known as Sanitary Commissioner in the Punjab, has received the appointment of private secretary to his Excellency.

COUNTLESS DANNER, themorganatic widow of King Frederick VII., is at the Castle of Glücksburg, suffering from erysipelas.

BARON ROTHSCHILD's celebrated pack of hounds have, from their "notes so tunable," obtained the sobriquet of the "Hebrew Melodists."

COUNT DE CHRISTEN, who was included in the amnesty signed by the King at Naples, has proceeded to France.

THOMAS DAVIES, a superannuated pilot, died at Swansea on the 3rd inst., aged within twenty-one days of 100 years.

SIR WILLIAM SOMERVILLE has at length definitively fixed upon the title under which he is to be ennobled. It is Baron Athlumney, of Somerville and Dollardstown, in the county of Meath.

A NOBLEMAN, who is a member of the Bar and was recently married, pleaded at eleven o'clock in Court, and at twelve was at the altar. This was business-like.

PRINCE JULIUS, younger brother of King Christian IX., and Major in a regiment of Prussian Hussars, has left Düsseldorf for Denmark. It is said that he will leave the Prussian service, and take a command in the Danish army.

THE EMBANKMENTS necessary to form the contemplated new docks at Lymington, in Hants, will reclaim one thousand acres of land.

NEVADA TERRITORY is said to be the richest silver-bearing country in the world. It is estimated that the product of this year will be £3,000,000.

SIXTEEN PERSONS HAVE BEEN POISONED by eating unwholesome pork at Herrstadt, in Prussian Silesia.

THE NUMBER OF NEGROES who have been armed and mustered into the service of the Federal Government amounts to 40,000.

MRS. HERON, wife of the manager of a farm at Hartsde, about ten miles from Rothbury, was frozen to death in a snowstorm last week while returning from paying a visit to her mother.

THE GOVERNMENT has commenced collecting the income tax and assessed taxes in Southampton by the aid of its own paid officials, who receive a poundage instead of a regular salary. The plan has given complete satisfaction.

A MISSISSIPPI STEAMER TOOK FIRE on the 11th ult. and was run ashore. About thirty persons were either drowned or burnt to death.

A GREAT number of travellers have lately arrived at Alexandria on their way up the Nile; among others, the Duke of Rutland, the Earl of Scarborough, Lady Herbert of Lea, and Earl Spencer.

OVER £10,000 worth of property was destroyed by fire in the corn stores of Mr. William Cochrane, of Limerick, a few days ago.

NO LESS THAN 5821 MEN are advertised in New York as not having reported themselves for service in the Federal army, although their names were drawn from the ballot-box as draughted men.

THE RUMOUR that Abd-el-Kader was dead appears to have been incorrect, as the latest accounts speak of the ex-Emir being at Medina, preparing to return to Damascus.

AN OFFICER, arrived at Chattanooga, inquired of a negro where he could find accommodations for his horse. "Don't know, Sar," 'bout the 'commodations. De fence rails is all gone, and dar nint nothin' for 'em to eat any more, only a few barn-doors; an' we want dem for the General's horses."

SUSAN CHASTNEY, barmaid at the Falcon Tavern, Fetter-lane, London, was standing before the fire on Sunday afternoon, when her dress, disended by crinoline, caught fire, and she was so severely burnt that she died on Monday morning.

A RESPECTABLY-DRESSED, MIDDLE-AGED MAN was standing at King's-cross, London, a few days ago, when a heavily-laden van came up. He deliberately knelt down, laid his head in front of the wheel, and was instantly a mangled corpse.

A YOUNG WOMAN, having rowed two of her master's children across the river Idle, near Retford, was leaning over the boat's side to give one of them a kiss at parting, when the boat slid away, and she fell headlong into the river, and was drowned.

THE EXTENSIVE COTTON FACTORY OF M. AMICO, AT VIETRI, NEAR SALERNO, was almost entirely destroyed last week by an avalanche from the neighbouring mountain. No lives were lost, as the accident occurred on a fête day, when the workpeople were absent. The damage is estimated at 100,000 francs.

A ONE-LEGGED MAN DIED a few days ago in France. His wooden leg was buried with him; but his sister, on looking over his will, found that a sum of money was concealed in the leg, which, on being exhumed, was found to contain 1800 francs in gold.

THE INFANT SON OF ONE OF THE NEW ZEALAND CHIEFS has been baptised according to the rites of the Church of England. Her Majesty was sponsor, represented by a lady and two gentlemen. By her Majesty's desire, the infant was christened Albert Victor. Her Majesty presented the infant with a knife, fork, goblet, and £25.

THE FEDERAL CORVETTE KEARSAGE has returned to Cork and landed sixteen men enlisted in violation of the Foreign Enlistment Act. This is believed to be in consequence of action taken by the British Government.

BECAUSE MOURAVIEFF'S NAME IS MICHAEL the Russians have discovered that he bears a strong resemblance to the archangel of that name; though his conduct shows that there is very little human, much less angelic, in the character of the head butcher of Lithuania.

MARSHAL RANDON is about to open to the Parisian public a library, containing 5000 volumes and 6000 maps, belonging to the War Office, which have till now been hidden in the archives of that ministry. A comprehensive catalogue is also being made. The collection is said to be of vast interest and value.

ON THE 14TH OF OCTOBER the horribly-mutilated body of M. Camus, an officer of the French Chasseurs d'Afrique, was found some miles from Yokohama, Japan. M. Camus had gone out in the afternoon, as was his usual practice, for a ride. He was totally unarmed, not having with him even the small pocket-pistol which he sometimes carried.

THE COURT-MARTIAL ON COLONEL CRAWLEY.—The Court has continued its sittings since last week. Two or three of the sentries deposed to having seen the Sergeant-Major drinking brandy out of a tumbler, and on some occasions desiring them to participate, which, of course, they said they refused. None of them deposed to having seen him intoxicated. The case for the prosecution finally closed on Tuesday. The Court was occupied for the greater part of the day in the re-examination of Drs. Turnbull and Barnett in reference to a statement in their report of the death of Sergeant-Major Lilley that he had large quantities of brandy during his illness. The statement appears to have been mainly based on information given by Colonel Crawley to Dr. Barnett. Colonel Crawley, when the case for the prosecution was closed, said it was substantially the case for the defence. He had a few witnesses to call, and then he should ask the Court to adjourn for him to prepare his statement for the defence. On Wednesday a long discussion took place with reference to the reception as evidence of certain documents, Sir A. Horsford against and Colonel Crawley for the admission. The prisoner then called his witnesses, one of whom, a native merchant, swore that he supplied Sergeant-Major Lilley with much liquor, and that the Sergeant-Major was in the habit of drinking what may fairly be called freely.

THE LOUNGER AT THE CLUBS.

It is impossible to let Mr. Cobden's fierce attack upon the *Times* pass without notice. My friend Blogg is very excited about it. "Sir," says he, "it is the bravest thing that has been done for many a year. It is, to appearance, a terrier attacking a bull. But Cobden will hold on, and will come off victor; for the *Times* is something of a bully, after all, and more than once has had to shuffle out of a fight. Henry Berkeley once, if not twice, brought the *Times* to book. Thackeray gave the Thunderer such a dressing that it will, I venture to say, never hurl a bolt at him again. And Mr. Cobden himself last Session forced it to print a speech of his in full after it had published a meagre report, and a leading article full of misrepresentations. 'You must print my letter in answer to your article,' said Cobden, 'or my speech in full.' The *Times* swallowed the leek and published the speech. It will be remembered, too, that Mr. Horsman placed Mr. Walter in a very awkward position in the Session of 1862, when he rudely knocked the mask off the member for Berkshire's face, and pinned him down as responsible for the *Times* misrepresentations and slanders." Mr. Cobden has not mentioned the name of the man at whom he has hurled his dart, but everybody knows who it is; in fact, Mr. Cobden has all but named him. It is "he of the semi-official correspondence with Sir Charles Napier in the Baltic." But many will ask, as I asked Blogg, what the following means:—

Now, the question is forced on us whether we who are behind the scenes are not bound, in the interests of the uninitiated public, and as the only certain mode of abating such outrages as this, to lift the veil and dispel the delusion by which the *Times* is enabled to pursue this game of secrecy to the public, and servility to the Government—a game (I purposely use the word) which secures for its connections the corrupt advantages, while denying to the public its own boasted benefits, of the anonymous system.

"Well," said he, "I can only say this. When the father of the gentleman alluded to retired from the position now held by his son, he (the father) promptly got a county-court trusteeship, which was as good as a pension for life of £800 a year; and, not to descend to particulars, it is well known that other good things have gone in the same direction. I think it would be better for Thunderers, at least, to keep behind their clouds. They ought to be far above the cravings and passions of mere mortals; but certainly they should not be seen hurling the bolt with one hand and holding 'the hat' with the other." All this is strong talk, even for the energetic Blogg; but my readers will back him up in as much as they please, and leave the rest. As for me, I report him honestly.

Lovers of the marvellous and students of the occult sciences are delighted with the discovery professed to be made by a French gentleman, one M. Desbarrolles. This worthy has published his views on chiromancy, which, as I venture to inform some of my readers, is the art of divining character by the hand. There is nothing new in the "science" itself. It was condemned as a worn-out folly one hundred and fifty years ago, in the *Spectator*, and was ridiculed even by the credulous Sir Thomas Browne, who remarked that "master and principal lines" may be "observed in most digitate animals," and argued from this that we might as well tell the fortunes of dogs and cats, of swans and ducks, from the marks on their feet, as those of men and women from the lines on their hands. But M. Desbarrolles adduces much new testimony in favour of palmistry. His work, published in Paris, has gone through four editions in a few months, whilst he himself is giving lessons in the art, at the rate of twenty francs a time. In other words, he is one more example of a successful appeal being made to that love for the mysterious which lurks in all our natures, and which, occasionally, gets the better of education and commonsense. I cannot enter very elaborately into the theories of this successful charlatan; but I may tell you that thick fingers are held to mean a taste for dissipation; short, broad nails denote a capacious and quarrelsome temper; a long first joint to the thumb betokens energy and self-confidence; and that, as the entire hand is thus mapped out into a sort of moral chart, we may, with this new guidebook at our sides, test the character of our friends, without either having their bumps felt by a phrenologist or disburbing postage-stamps to professors of graphology. The Emperor and Empress of the French have both submitted their hands to this wonderful seer, who discerned in the lines of the Imperial fingers, "signs of a superhuman sagacity and intelligence which, in spite of our numerous experiences, we have never beheld elsewhere." Surely, all this is very funny. We knew that the prophet of knocks and raps, Mr. Home, found favour in the eyes of the Emperor; but this ready acknowledgment of the new professor of divination is encouraging indeed to all traders on the weaknesses of human nature. Why does not Zadkiel publish a French edition of his comic annual? I forgot to mention that, for some reason unknown, M. Desbarrolles was not permitted to examine the hand of the Prince Imperial.

The only people I know on this side the Channel who have shown any disposition to believe in palmistry are the inhabitants of Duthill, in North Britain. These earnest Christians, objecting to a minister presented by Lord Seafield, have adduced evidence before the Presbytery to show that not only are the new pastor's fingers too long, but that they are not particularly slender. But, as both the personal and mental attributes of the Rev. Mr. Robertson have been subjected to a complete critical analysis, I don't think we can charge our Scotch cousins with accepting chiromancy as a fact. The pious zeal which dwells upon the colour of a man's gums, the size and shape of his upper lip, the formation of his teeth, and the texture of his skin, is something too holy to be classed with mere French superstition. Too holy, that is, when it is accompanied by strictures upon his manners, complaints against his sermons, objections—actual objections—to his weight. It is not mental ponderosity, mark you, which is unpleasant to the people of Duthill, but the fact that their new minister stands six feet six inches in his stockings, and his weight is not much more than a stone per foot, which is so utterly unbearable they insist upon the cattle-show test, and would have their spiritual pastor chosen on the same principle as their shorthorns, so much weight to so much bulk. And now let me tell you some additional particulars concerning this singular case. That the Rev. Mr. Robertson has been appointed by Lord Seafield and is objected to by the people of Duthill is well known to all readers of the newspapers; but that he acted for several years as assistant to their late pastor, during which period a petition was presented desiring that his succession to the living should be assured, is a bit of information not so widely spread. But such is the fact, and, in making the appointment, his Lordship fully thought he was giving effect to the wishes of the flock. But—alas for the stability of popular favour! Mr. Robertson has been supplanted in the affections of his congregation by a Mr. Bain, and is now brought before the Presbytery on the charges I have enumerated; for, as it was not thought decent to accede to the petition by prospectively appointing one minister to a place held by another, and so encourage an uneasy longing for dead men's shoes, the appointment was not made until after the demise of the late Incumbent. The "objectors" had thus time to veer round and to discern blemishes where virtues were once apparent. A trial is instituted, the pleadings of which occupy eight months and give a pleasurable excitement to many country towns. If it is held that Mr. Robertson is not of the necessary make, shape, and qualifications, he will be rejected, and pressure will be exercised to bring in the popular Bain. If the complaints made are declared frivolous, he will have the pleasure of preaching to an unwilling, stubborn, and hostile people. How enviable is his position in either case, and what a comfortable discipline is provided for ministers north of the Tweed!

The friends of Colonel Primrose are very naturally irate at the club talk I alluded to last week, and which accused that officer of unworthily shirking duty in New Zealand, that he might retain his Staff appointment in India. I now have it on indisputable authority that, so far from wishing his corps to proceed to the field without him, he made special application to be permitted to resign his position as Adjutant-General of Madras, that he might lead his men in the field. This permission was refused by Sir Hope Grant, the Commander-in-Chief, on the ground that Colonel Primrose's departmental efficiency made his presence indispensable at Madras. The gallant officer himself being thus completely exonerated from the charges brought against him by gossiping quidnuncs, the

question now asked is why Sir Hope Grant should, for "the good of the service," deprive a regiment of its legitimate leader at the very time when his presence is most necessary?

Here is a good advertisement, cut from a Liverpool paper:—
Wanted, for the Liverpool Young Men's Christian Association, a librarian. Must be an active, steady man, and willing to advance the interests of the Association in every respect. Salary, £60 per annum to commence with. Hours from nine a.m. till ten p.m.—Address, prepaid, with copies of testimonials, before the 28th inst., to Mr W. H. Newett, 28, South Castle-street.

Surely activity and steadiness must be drugs in the Liverpool market, or while there is a warehouse to sweep or an errand to run this eminently Christian association might advertise in vain for these qualities at starvation prices. "Too much take-ee and too little give-ee," was the New Zealander's definition of the white men he had seen; and when rather more than a pound a week is offered for thirteen hours' labour a day, such labour demanding, moreover, a certain degree of education, one is inclined to repeat the words of that "intelligent native."

Have you heard of the new scheme for providing unbenevolent clergymen with livings? Each clergyman is to subscribe fifty pounds, which is to constitute membership of "an institute" established for the legal purchase of advowsons, incumbencies, and next presentations. The Lord Chancellor's livings, the sale of which has been recently facilitated by Lord Westbury's Act, are to be purchased as largely as the funds of the institute will allow, and then to be distributed among members as they fall vacant on some equitable principle. It is argued that the means of the "institute" will be largely augmented by donations and bequests, and that curates generally will find themselves benefited by belonging to this joint-stock company. When the projector of this scheme propounds his notions of an "equitable principle" of distribution, it turns out to be nothing more than the apostolic one of casting lots. If the whole thing is not a skit upon private patronage in the Church, the proposal to appoint to the cure of souls by the machinery of the gaming-table, and to create Incumbents by a turn of the wheel or a dive in the lucky-bag, is surely one of the most outrageous ever made.

A most uncomfortable theory is afloat concerning winds. Fifty-four years are said to constitute a cycle, each cycle is divided into periods, and the upshot of it all is that on New-Year's Day, 1864, we are to be regaled with a bitter, blighting east wind, which is to last throughout the spring. The west wind, which has made such havoc lately, is to give us a final hurricane on Christmas Day, before giving way to his eastern rival. Hating the wind in the east with the ardour of Mr. Jarndyce in "Bleak House," I turned to Admiral Fitzroy's letter in Wednesday's *Times*, hoping to find therein a refutation of this horrible theory. Imagine my delight at coming upon this sentence:—"The whole area of the British islands is so small, comparatively, that changes over them may be better estimated comprehensively on a wide scale (having especial reference to principal upper or cloud-bearing currents) rather than to local effects in confined or very limited districts." I have tried very hard to extract meaning from this exquisite bit of composition, and, having failed utterly, beg to submit it to you.

The outside public, from occasional paragraphs in the newspapers, will have become aware of the fact that measures are in progress in different quarters for celebrating the 300th anniversary of Shakespeare's birthday by some public demonstration in the metropolis. A Shakespeare committee has been formed which has adopted the prefix of "National," and which certainly comprises in its ranks numerous individuals of note and position. Unfortunately, however, these distinguished personages only give their names and not their attendance at the meetings of the committee; the consequence is, as is generally the case under similar circumstances, the acting powers of the committee have been usurped by a particular literary clique—graduates in the well-known Dilkosian school of tactics—who intrude their petty professional jealousies into its proceedings.

At a meeting of the committee on Monday last a proposal was made to invite Mr. Thackeray's acceptance of the office of vice-president—Mr. Dickens and Sir Bulwer Lytton, the two other great novelists of the day, having already had that honour conferred upon them. So natural and so reasonable a proposition did this seem to Colonel Sykes, the chairman of the meeting, that, remarking he supposed there could be no question as to the propriety of inviting so distinguished a man as Mr. Thackeray to accept this office, he was about to put the resolution as an unopposed motion, when one of the honorary secretaries of the committee, the well-known editor of a certain literary journal famous for puffing the books of its contributors, rose and objected that, as Mr. Thackeray was not already a member of the committee, he was ineligible for the office of vice-president. Attention, however, having been drawn to the fact that nearly the whole of the other vice-presidents had been solicited to accept the position conferred upon them without being previously called upon to join the committee, another writer in the journal spoken of—a novelist of feeble powers—took upon himself to say that he had reasons for believing Mr. Thackeray thought himself so immeasurably superior to the individuals composing the general committee that he would decline to join it, and he begged the committee not to demean itself, &c., &c., and so forth. This appeal to the self-dignity of a clique of little men, who, for the most part, take their cue from the one honorary secretary—the other never opens his lips, but for ever sits, "like patience on a monument, smiling at grief"—at once settled the question, and it was resolved—the contributors and hangers-on to the particular journal constituting of themselves a majority—that one of the greatest of living writers should not be vice-president of a movement which professes to have at heart the honouring of the literary calling, symbolised in the person of its most distinguished representative—"the poet of all time."

Such is the latest proceeding of the so-called National Shakespeare Committee, which is about to invite his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales to place himself in front of the movement. Let the Prince, however, pause for awhile until the daily press and leading journals, like the *Saturday Review* and others, have expressed their opinion on the constitution of the executive of a committee which is national only in name. So far as Mr. Thackeray is concerned, he can afford to submit to the paltry indignity sought to be put upon him, and can console himself with the reflection that when the name of every member of the Dixonian literary clique shall have passed into merited oblivion, his will still survive as one of the lights of English literature during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

The Rev. Mr. Hibbs writes:—

By your reference last week to Mr. Thackeray's essay in the *Cornhill* you have transferred to and fastened on me what has been alleged (whether truly or otherwise, it is not for me to inquire) against another person. Pray, Sir, for the credit of your profession, be induced to acknowledge candidly your mistake, and make, at least, this reparation, with all speed, to a much calumniated minister of the gospel of truth.

The friends and admirers of Mr. George Augustus Sala will be glad to learn that he has arrived safely in America, and is, no doubt, by this time busy in prosecuting his career of observation in Yankeland.

The *City Diary and Almanack*, published at one shilling, is perhaps the most useful work of the kind yet produced. Each week is complete on a separate page; there is room for memoranda and cash transactions; and the whole is interleaved with blotting paper—a very important consideration in a publication of this class. To my thinking, it beats Lettis's well-known diaries clean out of the field.

THE LOUNGER AT THE CATTLE SHOW.

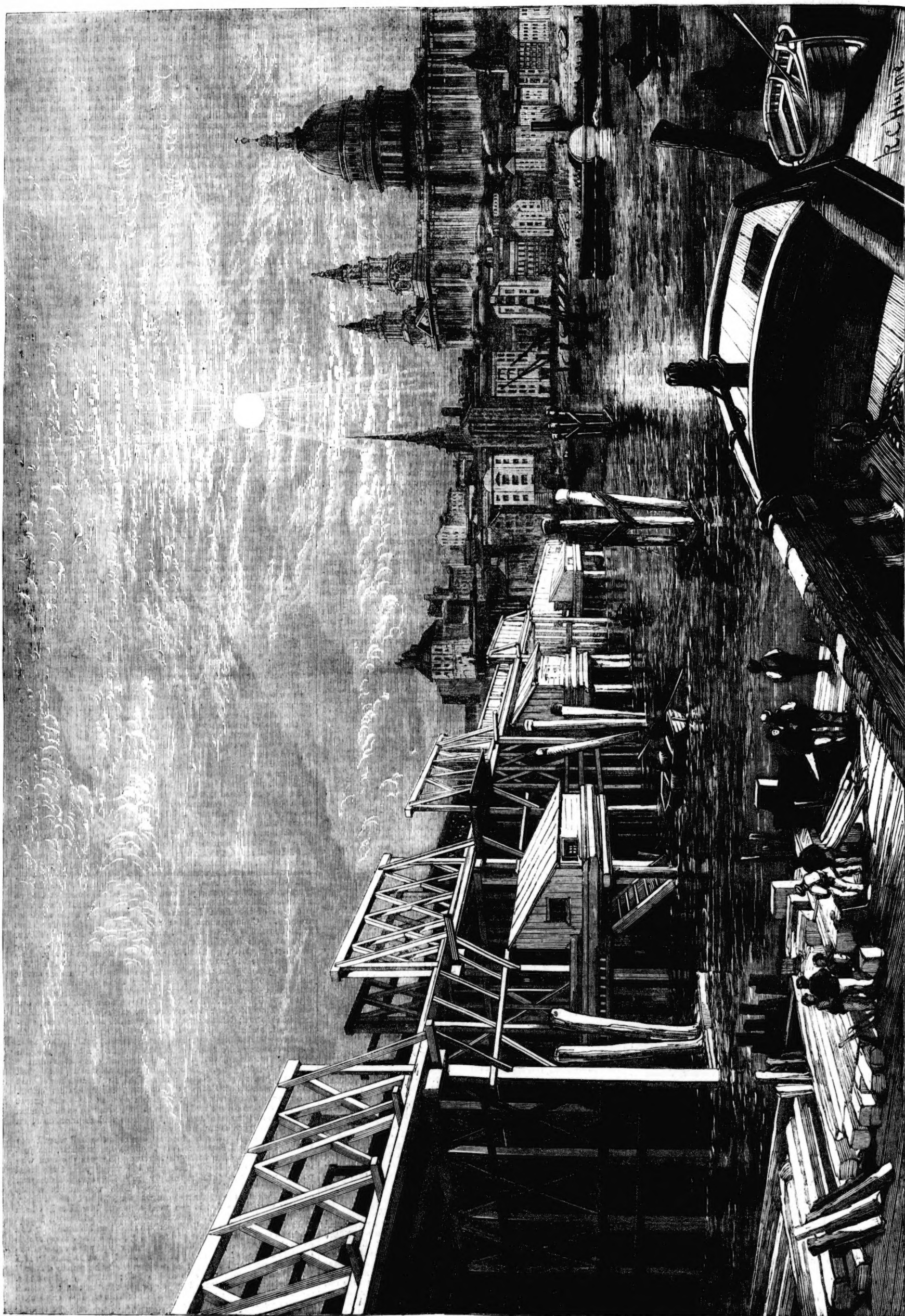
On Tuesday I took a pleasant stroll through the new Agricultural Hall, Islington, to see the animals, quadruped and biped, the machinery, the gigantic turnips, &c. This was my first visit to the show since its removal from Baker-street to Islington, and on entering the hall I saw in a moment that the change is a vast improvement in every respect. It is possible now to wander about and inspect the show with comfort; at Baker-street it was not possible. The new hall is a noble building, sufficiently capacious, simple and convenient in its arrangements, and well ventilated. Towards the middle of the day there must have been some three thousands people present, I think; but there was no crowding. The

passages were at all times passable, the cattle pens and stalls accessible, and the odour was not stronger than it is in the Caledonian Cattle Market. But, being neither an agriculturist, nor a grazier, nor a butcher, nor an amateur connoisseur of stock, I can give no opinion as to the merits of the animals; all seemed to me to be wonderful creatures. I may say, however, that I have seen fatter; but then I am told that this change is an improvement. And when I recollect the disclosures in a certain pamphlet, written, in 1858, by a Mr. Frederick Gant, surgeon, on the evil results of overfeeding cattle, I am disposed to think it is, and that Mr. Gant did no little good by his disclosures. I suspect, however, that there is still room for improvement in the matter, especially in the art of feeding pigs. Our porcine friends are still too obese to be healthy; and if they are not healthy pigs they never can be perfectly wholesome pork. And pig-feeders should never forget that to make real, good, sound, healthy, eatable pork is, after all, the whole duty of pig-feeders. A friend of mine suggested that the prizes ought not to be awarded until the animals have been killed by the butcher and tasted by the judges. I rather delighted in viewing the pigs; they were such curiosities, and looked so queer as they lay panting and grunting in their pens. There was one pen of diminutive prize grunners which I shall not readily forget. Viewing them sideways, they looked like magnified Bologna sausages. It was only by getting in front of them that you could discover their snouts, and these were so covered and weighed down by fat that, had they not been propped up by a block of wood, they would have been scarcely visible. I suppose these pigs all had tails; but I could discover the vertebral continuation only in one, and but just the tip of that. These pigs were pronounced to be "very handsome;" but, seeing how they panted for breath, I fancied that Mr. Gant would have decided that they were not healthy. I noticed, also, some Southdown sheep, very fat and ill at ease. They trembled on their legs, laboured for breath, and it was quite evident that neither the heart nor the lungs were working freely.

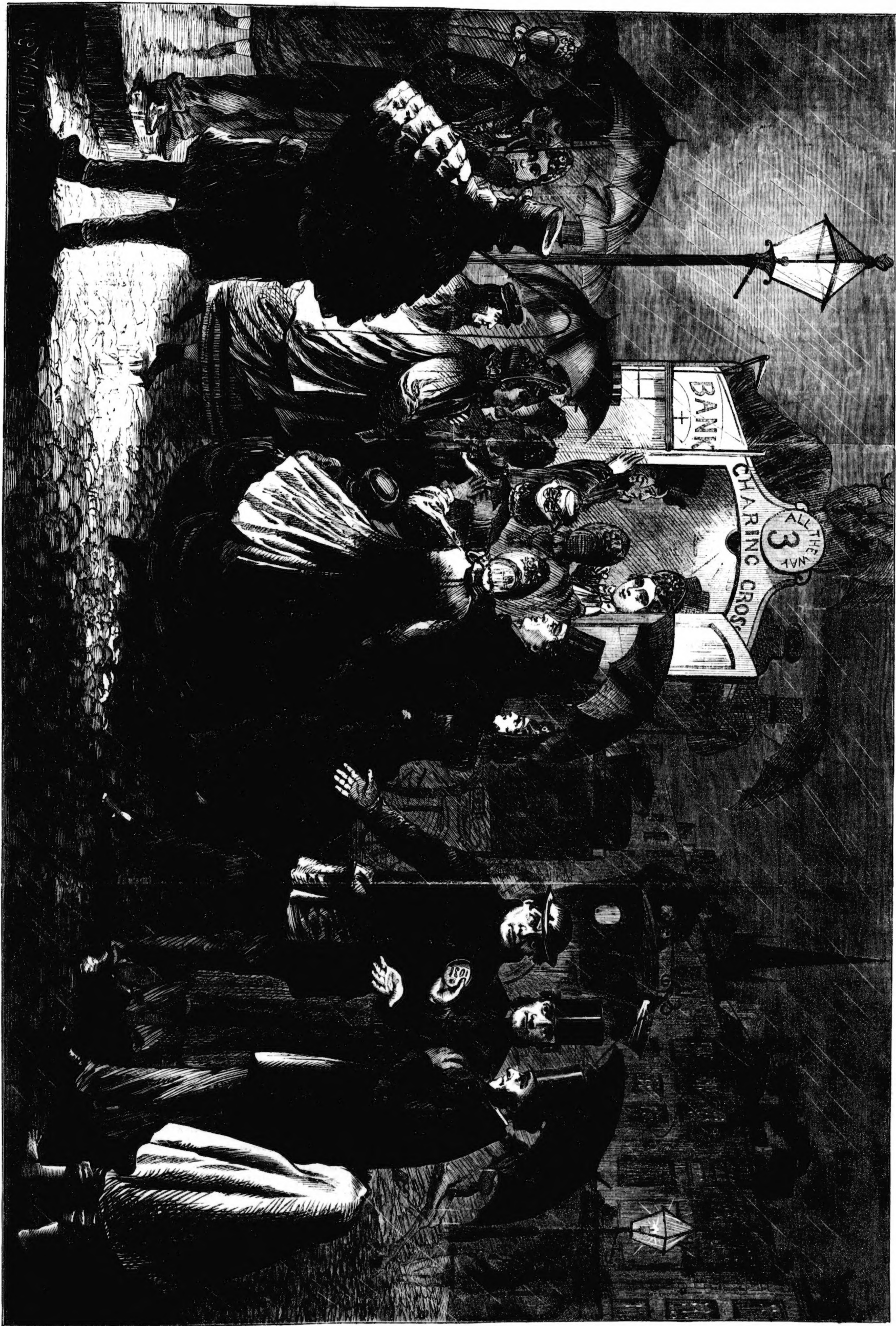
The "beasties" in this show, as I heard one of the attendants call the bullocks, were certainly not so fat as I have seen them at former exhibitions. Some say that they are not such fine animals. Perhaps, however, these critics may consider that fat is the criterion; but, after reading the aforesaid pamphlet and looking at the coloured pictures, I must decide otherwise. Indeed, Mr. Gant's book has created in me a strong disgust to Christmas beef, albeit the butcher adorns it with red and blue ribbons, and claps a penny a pound on to the price thereof.

There was nothing specially new observable in the machinery department, although there was very much that was worthy of notice. All this machinery has come into being within the memory of many of us. When George III. was King and his son was Regent, the only agricultural-machine maker was the village ploughwright. The factories of Ransome, Shuttleworth, Howard, Samuelson, &c., have all sprung up since then. Now some of the firms employ a thousand hands each, and the village ploughwright is an extinct animal. Like the aborigines of North America, he has disappeared—has been shoved out of the world by the pressure of modern civilization, as the phrase is; or, as Darwin would put it, the great law of "natural selection" has destroyed him—which simply means that he, being the weaker, has had to give way in the battle of life to the stronger. The machinery department is a favourite resort with me. Amongst "the beasties" I am not at home. I do not understand the points of the animals. But every one who will use his eyes and patiently examine what he sees may comprehend a machine. In the live-stock department the farmers and graziers are my superiors; but here "one man is as good as another, and, perhaps, better," as Lord Dundreary says. The most perfect piece of farming machinery is the thrashing-machine with a dressing-machine attached. It is moved by steam-power, and thrashes, dresses, and delivers the corn into sacks; and by the same power it would be quite possible to deliver it into a mill-hopper and grind it into flour ready for the baker. In America, I believe, all this is done by water-power. The reaping and ploughing machines are much younger than the former, and have not yet attained their destined perfection. But every year they are advancing; and long before the close of the century, as the thrashing machine has nearly put down the flail, so will the reaping and ploughing machines nearly extinguish the sickle and land-plough. I looked with great interest at the machinery in this exhibition—with much the same sort of interest as the late Dr. Arnold watched the first railway-train flying past Rugby. In that railway-train he saw with his prophetic eye the greatest revolutionary force of modern times; and, if I mistake not, agricultural machinery is destined to produce very grand and strange effects. The first effect of the use of machinery is, of course, increased produce from the land. This result we have already seen; but there is another ahead, which to me is still more interesting. I mean the elevation of the labourers. Indeed, I am not sure that this elevation has not begun. I think it has. I fancy I can already see a glimmer of light in these hitherto dark regions. But, whether this be so or not, I am persuaded that the introduction of machinery into farming operations must, before long, liberate the labourer from the fetters of ignorance and stupidity with which he has been so long bound. Machinery will lighten his labour. The thrashing-machine has already, to a great extent, delivered him from the dreadful and degrading labour of the flail; and soon in other directions it will produce a like result. But it will do more than this. It will set him thinking; for these machines must be managed and directed, and managed and directed by the labourers; and, as a natural consequence, their minds will be stimulated into activity, and will, as another natural consequence, grow in power. It has been said confidently that you cannot stimulate the mind of a negro above a certain low level. I do not believe this; but it is assuredly not true of the farm labourer. He is of the same stock as we are. Circumstances have made him what he is. Lift these depressing circumstances, and he will grow like his fellows. Of the bipeds in this exhibition—the landed proprietors, manufacturers, farmers, graziers, &c.—I have not much to say. The farmers were the most numerous, and were a sight to see. The moment you stepped into the hall you felt that you were out of London. These broad, healthy faces; these stalwart shoulders and limbs, so well clothed with honest flesh, certainly did not belong to Londoners. The ways of these men, too, are not our ways. Your Londoner is sharp, active, busy, quick of speech, and rapid in motion; but these gentlemen you see are quiet, easy, self-possessed, and much slower both in speech and movement than Londoners. But boast not, my cockney friend, that you are their superiors in mental capacity or acquirements, for I can assure you it is not so. Here, too, a great change has come about during the last twenty years. *Punch* still persists in making his typical farmer obese, stupid-looking, and clothed in broadbrimmed hat and top-boots; but *Punch* is a cockney, and knows no better. A farmer now is rarely obese; is seldom seen in top-boots, except when he rides to cover; and is quite as well educated as the London tradesman and manufacturer; and in dress and manners he is, on the average, quite as much the gentleman.

There were not many aristocratic swells in the hall when I was there. I saw Lord Berners: he is a notable agriculturist, but just now he is not popular with the farmers. He was the man who introduced into the Lords that game bill which turned the rural police, which the farmers mainly pay for, into gamekeepers, and transmuted rabbits into game. This was and is a sore offence, which the farmers cannot forget, and no wonder, for this new Game Act is the most atrocious law that has been passed for half a century. A farmer now cannot, without a license and permission of his landlord, shoot a rabbit on his farm. "You might as well," as a farmer said to me, "pass an Act to make rats game;" and then, quietly to tax the farmer to pay the wages of the landlord's keepers! I thought as I passed Lord Berners, "If I were you, my Lord, I would keep away from the public dinner." Lord Henry Lennox was also in the hall; but why I know not. His Lordship is not a landed proprietor nor a farmer; and I should fancy that his tastes do not tend to stock-breeding. It was curious to see his slim, lithe, feminine person gliding amongst the burly farmers and graziers. There was not a farmer present who would not make two of his Lordship.



PROGRESS OF THE WORKS AT THE LONDON, CHATHAM, AND DOVER RAILWAY BRIDGE ACROSS THE THAMES AT BLACKFRIARS.



A WET NIGHT—THE LAST BUS.

THE LAST OMNIBUS.

It is a most gratifying circumstance that the subject of the accompanying illustration, to which we have to call attention, enables us to commence our remarks with an observation which, although by no means original, is of constantly-recurring interest, and admits no difference of opinion.—We have had very wet weather lately. We will go farther, and suggest that the streets are in a dreadful state.

Emboldened by the assent of the majority of our readers, we will even hint that the public conveyances of the metropolis are susceptible of improvement, and that the resources of combinative genius might bring the omnibus system still nearer to perfection than it is at present.

This may be a bold assertion in the face of the new regulations which have been adopted in the City for the prevention of those ingenious devices not unknown to "the company," by which rival vehicles have been "nursed" off the road. But the civic authority extends only for a short distance, and it is still, indeed, set at naught by dawdling "hansoms," a whole string of which, loitering for chance fares, daily impede the traffic of the Poultry and Cheapside. Whatever good may have been effected by the late vigorous determination to keep the roads clear, it is quite certain that for foot passengers to cross at Leadenhall-street, the Royal Exchange, Cornhill, St. Paul's-churchyard, Farringdon-street, or Temple Bar, is to incur danger to life and limb, especially now that the early-closing movement has left the streets to the dim and insufficient light of the ordinary gas lamps.

To return to our omnibuses. In what year of the present century shall we behold all those improvements which were to be the immediate result of a conveyance monopoly? It is true that there are a large number of newly-constructed vehicles on the road, and some of them began by the ostentatious display of improvements which were soon suffered to fall into disuse; but there are few roads where the ill-ventilated, foul-strawed, close, and narrow boxes, contrived to carry eight and made to carry twelve, are not still an institution with all the vitality of a recognised nuisance.

The spacious Manchester and Glasgow 'buses which appeared during the exhibition seem to have decreased, rather than increased, in number. They may be too unwieldy for London streets; but can nothing be contrived that will be an improvement on the present vehicles?

It is pretty obvious that one great reason for all the failures is the practice of carrying too many passengers. In this way the roof ventilation is impeded by the legs of those who ride on the knife-board, and impart a flavour of corduroy and damp blucher to the internal atmosphere. The space devoted to each person is (to say nothing of crinolines) absurdly insufficient, and it is always difficult to choose, when any choice is left you, between the seat next the door, where you are swept down from head to foot by the muddy and ironbound skirts of female passengers, who struggle helplessly forward with general assistance; or submit to be stifled in the remotest corner near the horses, where you shrink from opening the sliding-trap and so exposing the driver's legs to a thorough draught.

The horror of being packed in such a confined space, exposed to all the inflictions of dirty straw, impracticable ventilators and windows, an attempt to open which would be destruction alike to glass and finger-nails, deters hundreds of people from riding in London omnibuses, except under pressing necessity; and the result is, that whenever such a necessity arises, the accommodation (?) is insufficient.

There has surely been ample opportunity for observing this result during the last few weeks at almost every omnibus station in London; and the amount of selfishness and ill-feeling it produces is something dreadful to contemplate. The fierce struggle which ensues to secure a place directly the vehicle stops, the indignation of those who are excluded, the calm exultation of those who have been so astute as to waylay the 'bus and pay double fare to retain their seats for the homeward journey; the threats of legal proceedings on the part of the casual who has been superseded by the regular customer and insists on taking the conductor's number; the pushing and hustling, and insinuating and retorting; the stolid and unmanly indifference with which every male passenger receives the inquiry whether "any gentleman would oblige a lady;" the affected inattention to the lady herself when she wistfully suggests to the conductor that "perhaps some gentleman would wish to ride outside." All these things render the starting of the last 'bus a painful spectacle, gratifying only to the bare-legged street urchin who wears a sack for a garment, and looks on smiling with the malicious independence of destitution.

THE RAILWAY BRIDGE AT BLACKFRIARS.

CASUAL passengers crossing Blackfriars Bridge feel not a little puzzled by the huge fabric of timber beams crossing and recrossing each other, and bound together by iron rods and bolts, which meets the eye. A vague notion is, of course, entertained that this erection is connected with the construction of the new railway and passenger bridges; but how all these complicated and (to the uninitiated) seemingly confused piles of wood can be necessary, or what purpose they serve in the progress of the works, passes the common comprehension. Everything, however, has its use; and not even a nail is driven without a purpose and without conducing to the end contemplated.

Our Engraving shows the progress being made with the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway bridge, which will be one of the most extensive and complete works of the kind ever erected. This will be 1216 ft. in length by 53 ft. in width, and adapted for four lines of railway. It will be supported by four piers and two abutments, leaving five openings to the river; the centre opening, 193 ft. in width; the two next it, 180 ft.; and the two outer, 162 ft. The bridge will be of iron, with parapets of an ornamental character (of trellis-work pattern), with decorated terminals above each pier, 5 ft. high; and the abutment terminals will bear the company's name and arms neatly designed in garter fashion. The abutments themselves are made of a handsome white stone known to architects as the "Bramley Fall" kind. Each of the above-named four piers is to be composed of three circular stone piers, standing 11 ft. 6 in. from one another, and each of these stone piers will support four iron cluster columns, the main girder of the bridge being carried by these columns, which will therefore be placed in twelve groups of four columns each.

The bridge runs almost parallel with old Blackfriars Bridge, and is intended to connect, by means of lines crossing Earl-street and Ludgate-hill, the London, Chatham, and Dover line with the lines which have communication with the Metropolitan Extension Railway at the further end of Farringdon-street. When the Great Eastern Railway shall have made its extension from Shoreditch through Finsbury to Smithfield, that also may be connected with the south-eastern coast by means of this bridge and line.

The works upon the bridge were commenced in November, 1862, and are to be completed in the spring of 1864. As may readily be guessed, immense quantities of materials are required for the work. In the bridge there will be nearly 1500 tons of cast iron in the columns, and about 3500 tons of wrought iron in the girders. The masonry in the piers measures 223,000 cubic feet, and in the abutments 114,000. For cofferdams and staging 70,000 cubic feet of timber has been employed. Many novel contrivances have been brought to bear in the placing of caissons and building, much being done by steam power. Among these may be mentioned Woodford's patent pump, without valves, which, along with water, forces up sand, gravel, large stones, &c. There is also a self-acting box, known as a skip, for lifting and placing the building materials.

Mr. Charles-Cabitt is the engineer in chief; Mr. J. H. Thomas, assistant engineer; J. W. Woodford (who had charge of the erection of the Victoria Bridge in Canada), with Mr. James Dunbar as his assistant, are the engineers in charge; Messrs. Peto and Betts are the contractors, and Mr. Charles Watson is agent to the general works. The greatest energy is displayed by the contractors in pushing on the works, Mr. E. L. Betts being constantly on the works directing operations in person.

OUR FEUILLETON.

THE LONG RECKONING.

(Continued from page 363.)

CHAPTER XVI.

"She is a great deal better, thanks, dear; will you come upstairs and see her? She will be so glad to see you. By-the-by, Georgiana," said Lady Bexteymont, dropping her voice a little, "before we go up to Helen, I should like to know if you can tell me what has become of Edmund Strensal?"

"Dear me! Aunt Eleanor," said Lady Melmerby, opening her eyes, "is that a subject that interests you? I thought as long as he was out of sight you were perfectly satisfied!" Lady Melmerby had a slight sense of ill-usage in the matter of Mr. Strensal, whose interests she had been promoting with Lady Helen some little time back, under a tacit tolerance which her aunt had rather abruptly withdrawn just when it seemed that the first matrimonial scheme of her new matronhood was culminating prosperously. But Georgiana read something in her aunt's expression which merged this faint reproach in an impulse of eager curiosity. "Did anything happen, then, before he went out of town?" And then a short communication took place, which resulted in Georgiana's throwing her arms round her aunt's neck and telling her that she was "a dear, good, darling Aunt Eleanor!" These enthusiastic exclamations were interrupted by Lady Bexteymont reminding her niece that she had not been told a word about what had caused Edmund's unaccountable disappearance from the scene.

What they had gone after Georgiana knew no more than the man in the moon. But they had started off without a moment's notice, and gone down to Thorskelf. They? Who? Edmund and Gaveloch. As to her not knowing what they went after, nobody knew. Even Margaret did not, nor Lady Matilda. They had not spoken to Melmerby before they went, or she would have got it out of him. Melmerby knew nothing, and had been very provoking about it. He had pretended to think that Edmund had been rejected, and had gone down to make preparations for his burial; for there was no doubt about his being desperately in love. She had herself been dying to come and hear about it, but she was afraid of being scolded for meddling, till she had heard Helen was ill—"And then I could bear it no longer, and resolved to come to the rescue; and, if your heart had not softened a little in the meantime, I was prepared to be very indignant and turbulent, and to stir up rebellion and civil war; for I could not stand by and see Helen break her darling heart without doing my bitterest in her behalf." In uttering these hints of how formidable she might have been in case of need, Georgiana pretended to assume a fiercely defiant air of tragic daring; and having thus, in the joy of the good news, playfully expended some of the seditious spirit with which she had come charged in provisional earnest, she was taken quietly up stairs on condition of saying nothing to make Helen nervous.

That evening a letter, directed to Thorskelf in Melmerby's sprawling hand, was posted.

"My dear Edmund," it ran, "what the deuce are you about? Georgiana has seen Helen this afternoon, and the murder is out. Why did you not tell anybody? and why in the world should you have started off like a dog with a kettle to his tail? Helen has been ill. It appears old B., in the part of indignant parent, was too much for the poor darling's nerves. But, *per contra*, her nerves were too much for Lady B., and Lady B. is likely to be too much for the I. P.; for, having come round herself, she is sure to make the old boy square. In the mean time, Georgiana is horribly indignant with you for being away at such a time. She says dear Helen has a beautiful trust and confidence in you, which you are putting to the proof most ungallantly. She (Ga.) thinks your conduct simply outrageous. Whatever old B. may have thought of you before—and I don't fancy he ever was a very warm admirer of yours—he must think you a good hand by this time. Look alive!

"Yr. affec. Coz."

This letter, being marked "Immediate," was delivered by itself on a salver to Edmund as he stood up to his knees in the documents of the muniment-room, which he and Gaveloch had been investigating for several days. All sorts of charter chests, cabinets, drawers, shelves, and pigeon-holes had been ransacked with little success. There were tin boxes of ancient and modern titles, agreements, &c., everything in the shape of papers and parchments that could be collected from the London and the country solicitors of the family. The solicitors themselves had not been called upon to assist in the search, which was strictly private. Strensal had received a visit from Macfarlane, and he was seeking for documents to throw light on the disagreeable suspicion which had fallen on his legitimacy. All that had come to light was the letter which Lucy Strensal had copied and put in a place where it was found almost at the beginning of the search, and a bundle of old cheque-books, in one of which was the counter cheque for a thousand pounds to J. A. M., £300 Mrs. A. R., £700 to same, with a remark in the margin, "Payable through Bank of Sydney, and £6000 to Phoenix Office, Sydney." The dates corresponded with the statement Macfarlane had made. And a very unpleasant statement it was; for Macfarlane, being naturally anxious to clear out of the country, had put it on pretty strong, in the hope of doing business in the first interview.

The servant who brought Melmerby's letter also announced that breakfast was on the table.

"Stop!" Edmund said, as he glanced through the letter; "have our things packed, and order a carriage and four with postillions to be at the door by twenty minutes to ten." He gave the letter to Gaveloch. "I must go to her, and tell her all I know of this wretched business," he said, and began to close and bolt the iron shutters. "We must leave all these things as they are. We have about sifted them. I am sorry you should have had so much trouble with so little satisfactory a result." Looking the double iron door with the ponderous key, he walked gloomily away along the vaulted passage.

"Won't you be much too early for the express if you start before ten? or have you business in Bradbale?" said Gaveloch, as they sat down to breakfast.

"No; but we must go round by Midgarth and have an interview with old Ralph Strensal. You know I should have gone to him at first if Macfarlane had not failed to appear."

"I don't think he liked your method of dealing with him. When you replied to his threat of opening the matter to Ralph by saying, 'The sooner the better,' and that you would go with him and hear what your cousin thought of it, he seemed very much taken aback."

"But not so much as by your question as to whether he had not lately seen something of Lady De Vergund. That seemed to frighten him more than anything else. And, when he failed to keep his appointment at Lincoln's Inn, I began to think the whole thing was an imposture of dear Julia's contrivance. Here is Fernby's note this morning to say the detectives have not been able to find a trace of Macfarlane. That looks very fishy. But the letter and the old cheque-book show there is some foundation. It won't do to leave such a business to smoulder. The straightforward thing is to ask Ralph what he knows about it; and, if he thinks he has any chance of upsetting my legitimacy, to offer him a fair field in a court of law. It is most unfortunate that I knew nothing of this before I spoke to Helen. I wonder how you could have kept that conversation with Alice Wolverstone dark so many years."

"I never attached any importance to it; and why should I retail a mere piece of gossip which must cause an uncomfortable feeling between you and your neighbours? but the moment you told me what the man had come about I thought I saw that woman's hand in it, knowing, as I did, that she knew of the tradition. I still think it very likely that this man is not even the genuine Macfarlane, but merely an impostor charged by Ju—Lady De Vergund—to stop you from proposing to Helen by sowing doubt in your mind. I am very glad he came too late for that, for you had hung fire quite long enough. I don't expect old Ralph to show fight; and, on the whole, though it looks a little Quixotic at first sight, I think it is the most

honourable course to have a full understanding with him before clinching the matter with Helen."

"I shall have to tell her all about it, and she will have to tell her parents; and then the match will be broken off to a certainty. It is a sort of thing that, once suggested, can never be thoroughly disposed of. I suppose we are bound to believe it just that the sins of the father should be visited on the children, and so I have no right to complain; but, when I think what a blow it will be to my poor mother, both for the future and from the past"—here he took a great gulp of tea, which must have been very hot, for it nearly choked him and brought the tears into his eyes, which accounted for his pocket-handkerchief. "And that poor darling Helen, too, what has she done to come in for her share of this blight which has fallen upon us?"

"Do not be down-hearted, old fellow. You may depend there is not much in it; and if there was it would be no fault of yours, and you would bear it like a man. Of course it would be very bitter. It always is to lose anything valuable. Still, you have a great deal that you cannot lose by an accident of this sort. Good health, good brains, a good conscience, a good reputation, and, after all, it is a great thing not to lose any of yourself; to have a self, any integral component of which would be a much greater loss than such mere accessories as estate or name. 'The man's the man for a' that.' If you had lost your eyesight in a quickset edge, or your honesty in a pecuniary transaction; if you had got an addling concussion of the brain in riding under a tree, or disabled your left lung in an inflammation, it would really be a much greater misfortune than losing Thorskelf and the name of Strensal. Your mother's name is not a bad one, and your grandfather left you a good deal of personalty in his will. You would still have four or five thousand a year, and still be in a very fair position, where you could use your talents for the good of your country. I am not talking as I should talk to a man with whose circumstances I was not identified; but the better half of me would suffer exactly the same, minus the loss of property, as you; and, speaking as the fortunate worse half of dear Margaret, I will not compare my loss in her advantages to any of the serious calamities I talked of just now. I should consider it a much greater misfortune than the worst that can come of this, if she were to lose one of her front teeth. But, though I have been looking at the worst that can come of it, I don't believe that anything of the sort will come of it. If you trouble that worthy man, Macfarlane, to prove his statement in a court of law, you may depend he will not find it easy. He knows what he is about too well to try it on. If they had ever had good proof of a marriage, they would not have compromised it so cheaply; and, if they could not prove it then, how much less now?"

"It is very good of you, John, to take such a cheerful view, and to hold me up, instead of grumbling over your share of our misfortune. You have been a true brother; and I should have been ten times as wretched if I had not had you with me. And to feel that dear Margaret is safe from the storm under your loving shelter takes away a great weight. It is my mother and Helen. If my mother had not been living and Helen had not cared for me, I should have been able to contemplate shipwreck as coolly as Simonides. A man is not worth much if he cannot find standing-room in the world, and hold his own, and face his fate when accident takes away what came by accident. But women have a much firmer faith in the value of things. It would break my mother's heart to see me dispossessed of my inheritance, besides the dreadful shock of finding that her marriage had been a nullity, and that the husband of her youth, to whose memory she has been so devoted, was never truly her own."

"The supposition is too impossible. Whatever your father may have been (and, as we did not know him ourselves, we will leave him out of the question), your old grandfather, whom we did know, certainly was an honest man, if ever there was one. If he had had any real doubt about there being a substantial impediment he would never have entrapped his friend's daughter into a dubious marriage with his son."

"I should hope not. And I should hope my father had no belief in a previous marriage, or he must have been a greater miscreant than I can easily believe. But it seems, by there being no traces of any legal consultations on the subject at either our town or country solicitors', that the claim was bought off with hard money, and that no professional advice was taken—probably with a view of greater secrecy. They may have both been convinced that there was nothing in it, but thought it wiser to buy the claimants off rather than raise the question whether there really was any claim at all. Macfarlane said that much better terms would have been got if the woman had not been in love with another man, who was too eager to secure the money by marrying her to allow the marriage claim to be pushed as resolutely as it might have been. He was crippled in his bargain by both the woman and her lover pulling against him. Both of them were eager for compromise. Is it to be wondered at that, under such circumstances, my father and grandfather should both treat the marriage as a pretence, though they might be glad to get rid of the pretenders?"

"Well, do not show signs of doubt about the goodness of your title in talking to Ralph. Perhaps you had better let me talk to him. You are so dreadfully candid in admitting all possibilities, however improbable, as long as they are against yourself."

"No, John! I shall not do anything to give him a worse idea of my case than I really have. I have my mother's, and Margaret's, and Helen's interests to consider as well as my own. There is no danger in truth, and I think if he is spoken to without reserve he will behave like a gentleman. He may know something of the transaction himself. He was just about the same age as my father, and they were friends, and as near relations as you and I are."

When they reached the Grange and unfolded their business to Ralph Strensal, the old squire showed signs of considerable agitation. He seemed particularly shocked at finding that the rumour of such a scandal should have come out through the indiscretion of his children—through the indiscretion of his wife he should rather say, for he had no idea that his children knew anything about it.

The question, however, was, what he himself knew about it? Well, he did not know much. He heard about it first when his friend Arthur was in disgrace with his father. The two elder brothers were then alive, and they talked to him about it, and then he saw Arthur in London. At that time the possibility of a Scotch marriage was treated as a joke; and he had heard Arthur say that if he was married he would have good ground for a divorce. For the woman had, to his certain knowledge, misconducted herself with a lover of her own class. After the death of his brothers, Arthur became much more reserved in talking about this Scotch adventure; and when the marriage with Lady Matilda was coming on he had been very angry with Ralph for some joke about possible bigamy. After this they became much less cordial friends. He always thought that a fellow called Crutchley, a barrister, who was a protégé and confidant of old Cousin Edmund, had something to do with winding up that business. "He was at Thorskelf a long while drawing up the settlements; and I found he had been to Glasgow for a week in the middle of his visit, and asked him if he had settled matters to the satisfaction of the other young lady, who pretended to be Mrs. Arthur. And he gave me a bit of advice gratis—recommending me not to say more than I could help about that, as neither of my cousins might like it, and hinting that it might look like a desire on my part to put a spoke in the wheel and cause a hitch in cousin Arthur's marriage with Lady Matilda. Crutchley at that time positively assured me there was nothing in it. But he was a lawyer, and it seems by this cheque-book that he had been instrumental in hushing up the matter with eight thousand pounds. As you seem anxious to sift this matter to the bottom, I should like to hear Crutchley tell all he knows on his oath."

"If you think there is a reasonable chance of establishing my illegitimacy, by proving a previous marriage, Crutchley can be called as a witness in a court of law."

"Good Heavens, my dear Edmund, what a mess that would make! If you authorised him to reveal all he knew in private that would be enough. He might be able to disprove the whole thing. He would certainly be able to prove or disprove the identity of this man who represents himself as Macfarlane, and that of the woman, both of

whom Lord Gaveloch suspects Julia De Vergund of having vamped up to match the story she got from my daughter Lucy. You say he absconded when you challenged him to come with you to see me. That looks bad. Well, the reasonable thing, if you want to have the affair cleared up, is to get at Crutchley and have on oath what evidence he could give in a court of law out of him privately. To confront these Macfarlanes with him, if they are to be found, and take a good legal opinion as to what my chance is worth. If it be worth nothing, there is an end of the matter; but even if it were worth everything it would be a very unneighbourly and uncousinly act in me to try to oust you by legal process. It would be much better to make a private arrangement. You have not married yet, and possibly."

"Possibly, nay, very probably, I never may; but I could enter into no bargain of that kind. If you have a chance of proving your right, we shall have to fight it out and settle it for good. I have offered my hand, and it has been accepted. The thing must be settled at once. Can you come up to town with us and find this Crutchley? I don't understand how the family should have lost sight of him. Let me see. When I was six or seven years old, soon after my father's death, a man with a bald forehead and shaggy black eyebrows—was that Crutchley? but he never came to Thorskelf again."

"It sounds like him; and there was a reason for his not coming again. About half a year after your father's death he wanted to marry Lady Matilda; and she was very much disgusted, and so was your grandfather. How long can you give me? The twelve o'clock train?"

"Eleven five now. We can do the seven miles in five-and-thirty minutes. A quarter of an hour to get your things, and be off. In the mean time I will write a telegram to send on from Bradbleak, that my attorney may be finding out while we are on our way where Crutchley is and meet us at the station."

When they reached town, about half past four o'clock, a young gentleman from Edmund Strensal's man of business, in Lincoln's-inn-fields, was waiting on the platform with a note, informing him that Mr. Crutchley was down at Torquay, suffering from a severe attack of asthma. Old Ralph, who had been hurried off his legs by the flurry of his sudden journey and the excitement of the errand on which he had started at a moment's notice, could not travel further till the morrow. Edmund made an appointment to see him at his hotel at ten that evening.

"Grosvenor-square!" and away rattled the hansom out of the station.

When the cab pulled up near the door of all doors in Grosvenor-square, Lady Melmerby's carriage was stopping the way. "Lady Helen was at home—her cold was better; her Ladyship was downstairs to-day for the first time—Lady Melmerby had come to sit with her while Lady Bexteymont went out for a drive; his Lordship was much indisposed with gout—the medical man was in attendance on his Lordship in his bedroom." The butler, as he preceded Mr. Strensal up stairs, was divided between wondering whether Lady Helen would faint on his announcement, and reproaching the fortunate visitor for not looking happy enough for the auspicious occasion. Mr. Strensal's position with Helen was not unknown to the household, and his protracted non-appearance had been a source of intense and agonising disquietude to the lady's maids and housekeeper, who could not be expected to refrain from consulting that august sage—the butler—on the solution of this untoward phenomenon.

(To be continued.)

Literature.

Queens of Song: Being Memoirs of the most Celebrated Female Vocalists, &c. By ELLEN CREATHORNE CLAYTON. Two volumes. Smith, Elder, and Co.

This book is about as thoroughly ladylike as any book or thing could possibly be. It is written by a lady, is about ladies, and is evidently designed for ladies. It deals but little with men, although an occasional mention of Mozart or Rubini can scarcely be avoided, and professes to give only that half of the history of singing which has been enacted by the female sex; therefore, it seems natural enough to call it "a lady's book"—a phrase not always considered complimentary, any more than is that other phrase, "a man's book." But yet, being about women, it might more properly belong to men, as the worshippers of Piccolomini, Bosio, or Crivelli; whilst British wives and sisters are allowed to have their own way as admirers and partisans of that duck of a Mario or little love of a Giuglini. But the matter is unimportant. In England music is a thing of such universal favour that there is little chance of a book upon so attractive a subject not meeting attention. "Queens of Song" professes to give biographies of "some of the most celebrated female vocalists who have appeared on the lyric stage from the earliest days of opera up to the present time." This object appears to have been well accomplished, and it would be difficult to mention any one distinguished name which has been omitted. On the contrary, the list contains many names, even of Englishwomen, which will be in no way familiar to the general reader. Very often one memoir is sufficient to contain all that is known concerning many geniuses, who revolve round the great central light, and assist at a general effect, whilst they cannot hope to get up a lustrous magnificence on their own account. These two large and handsome volumes commence with the rivalries of Katherine Tofts and Margarita de L'Epine, which convulsed society some hundred and fifty years since. Then come the historical names of Anastasia Robinson and Lavinia Fenton, with the happy sequels bestowed upon them by the Earl of Peterborough and the Duke of Bolton. Sophie Arnold is an interesting French chapter; and such memoirs as those of Grassini and Catalani have that peculiar charm which always hangs around that which borders upon the reality of our own times. But the second volume will be found of more general interest, every page being full of pleasant reminiscences, from Giuditta Pasta to Teresa Tietjens. Of the famous careers of these some twenty queens of song we need scarcely remind the reader. It is not easy to forget the long career of Mme. Pasta, whose Medea was terrible even so late as the year 1850, when she last appeared at Her Majesty's Theatre. Miss Paton underwent a strange, eventful history; and not less so Sontag and Malibran; whilst Bosio and Catherine Hayes follow as more examples of splendid careers being cut short by premature death. The stories of Grisi, Alboni, Jenny Lind, Piccolomini, and Louisa Pyne are brighter pictures.

It could scarcely be expected that Miss Clayton's memoirs should be polished and vigorous specimens of biography. Every name is necessarily bound to be the subject of laudation, and, consequently, every page teems with the record of triumphs. And, again, as singers can leave behind them nothing tangible as other artists can, everything has to be taken from contemporary accounts. Therefore, every chapter teems with passages from "one writer," "one critic," until the impression is created that the book is no more than a large compilation. To a certain extent that is the case; but, as has been shown, it is unavoidable. But Miss Clayton has fallen into many inaccuracies, in themselves unimportant perhaps, but which go far to verify suspicions of bookmaking. However, the memoirs have interest, and in many respects are highly curious. Upon the whole, it is difficult to think of female singers as the most immaculate set of people in the world; although the "Queens of Song" have their various peccadilloes carefully whitewashed here. But in general they have many excellent points, prominent among them being unbounded charity, so far as money-giving goes; although it may be easily argued that the rapid and enormous fortunes made preclude the idea of charity in the more serious sense. Six fine steel engravings, portraits, decorate these two volumes.

TWO BOOKS OF TRAVEL.

The Ionian Islands in the year 1863. By Professor D. ANSTED, M.A., F.R.S., &c., &c. W. H. Allen and Co.

Travels in Mexico, South America, &c., &c. By G. T. VIGNE, Esq., Author of "Travels in Cashmere," &c. 2 vols. W. H. Allen and Co.

The first of these books is readable as well as informing; but it contains no matter that we can well extract, and offers no topics for

such casual criticism as that of these columns. It is a very good account of the Ionian Islands, and that is all that need be said of it. If anybody wants to know all about "the Septinsular Republic of Ionian in 1863," let him get Mr. Ansted's work and read it.

With "Travels in Mexico" we are a little puzzled. Mr. Vigne having died while the book was in course of printing, the preface is by the publishers, who tell us that Mr. Vigne had, in the first instance, no intention of printing his notes; and that, though the reader may find something "wanting in artistic or rhetorical embellishment," he will be repaid by the author's "remarkable freshness of feeling, his unaffected style, and conscientious truthfulness." Messrs. Allen and Co. proceed to say that "it is possible that the composition may not always defy rigid criticism, as it was less anxiously polished, less elaborately worked up for effect than"

other books of travel. Now, all this reads like a very bad joke. In the first place, "rigid criticism" does not demand that a book of travel should be "anxiously polished," or "elaborately worked up for effect;" though we are permitted to gather from this preface that publishers imagine that is what "rigid criticism" does look for. We beg to inform them and all other publishers whom it may concern that they delude themselves in this matter. This "polish," this "working-up," is what publishers in general want, and what the public and the critics do not want. If Mr. Vigne's book had the other qualities for which the preface vouches, along with a little combining and co-ordinating faculty, we would gladly excuse want of literary finish. But, knowing something of the regions through which Mr. Vigne's travels extended in South America, we must say we can't see anything in him as a traveller. In many places we are quite unable to make out his meaning. It is not that his writing wants "polish," or "finish," or "working up;" it is, that it is unintelligible. What, in the name of English, are we to make out of pages 172, *et seq.*, in vol. i.? What are we to suppose was the intention of the author in putting down that he heard the Rev. Ward Beecher declare that he never saw a picture of the Agony in the Garden which satisfied him? There must surely have been some profoundly occult motive for making a memorandum of such a platitudinal! Or is it imagined that such a remark could have been "worked up" by the author into something better if he had revised the sheets in their passage through the press?

By mere accident, the book does contain a few pages that are interesting. They consist, however, of a quotation—from the *North American Review* of July, 1831—and the English reader will be amused to find that every single prognostication of the writer of the article on political progress from which the quotation is made has been falsified by events. Here is a prophecy for you:—"Those States are in danger of the greatest changes which are organised on a mixed principle (1). The two simplest Governments are greatly the safest and least likely to be affected by the convulsions of the times—Russia and the United States (1). On the other hand, we consider the state of England as highly critical." And, in that vein, our American friend (writing in 1831) goes on to anticipate that England will become a republic in a short time, and to urge that it is the function of America to "show to the world that blood is not the natural cement of liberal institutions; that the arts of society flourish under their influence; and that man is not the worst enemy of his neighbour or himself."

No one can read these lines to-day without lifting up his eyebrows in amazement. But, let no one be so illogical as to blame Republicanism for the American war; and let no one forget that we—England—have been guilty ourselves in the matter of slavery.

LITERATURE UNDER AGE.

Lottie Lonsdale; or, the Chain and its Links. By EMMA JANE WOODHOUSE. Virtue Brothers and Co.

Stanton Grange; or, at a Private Tutor's. By the Rev. J. C. ATKINSON. Illustrated by F. W. Keyl. Sampson Low and Co.

Stories and Tales. By H. C. ANDERSEN; translated by H. W. Dulcken. Eighty Illustrations by A. W. Bayes. Routledge and Co.

The Black Panther; or, a Boy's Adventures amongst the Redskins. By Sir C. F. LASCELLES WRAXALL, Bart. Illustrated by Louis Huard. Sampson Low and Co.

Tales of Many Lands. By M. FRASER TYTLER. Illustrated. Virtue Brothers and Co.

Luke Ashleigh; or, School Life in Holland. By ALFRED ELWES. Illustrated by G. Du Maurier. Griffith and Farran.

The Rector's Daughter; a Tale for the Young. By ANN BOWMAN. Illustrated. Routledge and Co.

Every Boy's Annual. Edited by EDMUND ROUTLEDGE. 100 Illustrations. Routledge and Co.

George Stanley; or, Life in the Woods. Edited by JOHN C. GEIKIE. Illustrated. Routledge and Co.

Adventures of Rob Roy. By JAMES GRANT, Esq. Illustrated. Routledge and Co.

William Allair; or, Running Away to Sea. By Mrs. HENRY WOOD. Griffith and Farran.

Marian and Her Pupils; a Tale for Girls. By CHARLOTTE LANKESTER. Illustrated. Routledge and Co.

The Happy Home; or, The Children at the Red House. By HENRIETTA LUSHINGTON. Illustrated. Griffith and Farran.

Tiny Stories for Tiny Readers in Tiny Words. Illustrated. Griffith and Farran.

Little Blue Hood. By THOMAS MILLER. S. Low, Son, and Co.

Aunt Maddy's Diamonds; a Tale for Little Girls. By Mrs. HARRIET MYRTLE. Routledge and Co.

Learning better than House and Land. By J. CAREY, LL.D. Revised Edition. Routledge and Co.

The Child's Picture Scrap-Book. Routledge and Co.

British Soldiers, Sailors, and Volunteers. Three Separate Parts. Routledge and Co.

One of the most powerful signs of Christmas has already set in "with its accustomed severity." Already the table groans, fully as much as table ever did groan, beneath the weight of new bright red-sided and gold-backed books for younger readers—the ages of eight to eighteen being especially honoured by the publishers who addict themselves to this juvenile ware. On Boxing Night every right-minded person, from pit to gallery, is reminded by the faithful Clown of the family which was so large that there were not measles enough to go all round. Reversing this piece of domestic antique, it would be easy enough to imagine that there are more literary presents than can go round all the children, unless extra good-natured people should eat at least two Christmas dinners, and remember to give at least two Christmas-boxes in return. Some of the new books are just as pleasing as those of last season and the season and seasons before that—probably because they scarcely differ from the former successful favourites.

"Lottie Lonsdale" is a very pretty tale for girls; but boys will think it scarcely half wicked enough. The heroine is a thoroughly good young girl, simple and innocent, and contrasting favourably with her wealthy cousin in high life, Miss Bouverie. Whilst Miss Bouverie works the milliners and dressmakers to death, and is astonished that anybody can pity them, Lottie relieves their distresses and enlists the sympathies of good young missionaries in their behalf. She effects much good in this way, and is rewarded with the love and the hand of an angel on earth, Mr. Heathcote; whilst her haughty cousin marries a fine Baronet, and is no more really happy than any fashionable people are ever supposed to be by those who know all about it, especially when they happen to be Sunday-school teachers.

Mr. Atkinson's "Stanton Grange" is a thoroughly good, sound boy's book. Under the care of a private tutor, the pupils never appear to read one line, but spend all their time in shooting, fishing, boating, boat-building, and kindred sports and amusements. Their adventures by flood and field are terrible; but no one is killed, and the book passes over pleasantly enough—teaching much good *more* in a pleasant fashion, and natural history in a natural manner, as compensation for the less solid matter. Mr. Keyl's engravings are full of animation.

A volume of "Stories and Tales" by Hans Christian Andersen needs no more introduction here than its own name can supply. Some few of the tales in the present collection are quite new; and

the whole is illustrated with eighty cuts, some fanciful as Andersen himself, others singularly prosaic and literal.

However some other books may deal in tameness, Sir Lascelles Wraxall is determined to make atonement in harrowing interest in his "Black Panther." The proprietor of a farm in the Vale of the White Horse is shamefully turned out after his family have held for a century. He emigrates with his wife and children, taking also his nephew, a kind of dependent, named Walter Arden, some fourteen years of age. Walter is described as the perfection of everything manly and chivalrous; and, in fact, with the assistance of a clever negro, he does everything for the new Texan immigrants. He is the best shot ever known, and is always killing something, or being nearly killed by something. Then there is a stampede of buffaloes, and another of wild horses, and an inundation. After that a prairie on fire, with a preliminary stampede of thousands of savage beasts, all of whom go over Walter, and, after them, the fire, as Walter, covered in a raw hide, lies down in a bit of a swamp. An adventure with Delaware Indians proves equally fortunate, and explains the title. The negro Daniel is the Black Panther, having been so named by the Delawares, with whom he had lived many years. A more exciting book than this could scarcely be found. Each illustration is on the verge of a horrible death.

"Tales of Many Lands," by M. Fraser Tytler, are well-written stories of peaceful or warlike adventure, mixed with much teaching bordering on history. "The Young Chief" is infinitely superior to the mass of young people's reading; but the addresses to the children are not enlivening, and all the tales are tinged with a sadness which leaves an unpleasant effect. Here are more pictures, of just average merit for the style of work.

Mr. Elwes adds "Luke Ashleigh" to a list of graceful writings. The scene is laid in Holland, some years ago, at a model school, where four-and-twenty manly boys compete in all the athletic customs of the country, and seem to have but little to do with the schoolroom. Stories of fighting in the snow, fighting on stilts, skating, and gentler sports, occupy much of the volume, and will be found very fresh for this class of literature. Mingled with it is an episode of an English tutor, who has sacrificed his own fortune to pay his father's debts; but, of course, he is ultimately rewarded by a good consular appointment; and he is supposed to obtain a young lady's hand in exchange for one previously closed against him. Much of this story is far too sentimental and weak for boys or men; but the chief business of the book will do good service. M. Du Maurier's illustrations are brilliantly lifelike and grotesque.

"The Rector's Daughter" is a strange mingling of classes and characters, who meet together and make up a curious plot. There are Lords, Baronets, Rectors, Doctors, and common people, who, in the end, marry indiscriminately, and always for love, which sometimes happens to be accompanied by money. People die violently in order to let fortunes change hands; and, when they have changed, they always prove to be mortgaged to somebody else. But the right people come together in the end. The hearty people and the angels are all rewarded, and the reckless and improvident are frozen in the snow, or make fatal acquaintance with *delirium tremens*. Such matters are too wildly improbable to give good lessons; but still the book has interest.

Mr. Routledge's "Every Boy's Annual" will be eagerly welcomed by those who do not seek its attractions in monthly magazine fashion. The contents of the present volume are alike varied, interesting, and amusing. Amongst the continued writings will be found "The Adventures of Rob Roy," one of Mr. Grant's series of stories, and written in his best style. Mr. Stirling Coyne's long dramatic experience makes him good authority on the fortunes of "Sam Spangles, Harlequin;" whilst the Rev. Mr. Wood is equally at home in some papers on "Domestic Pets." Articles on Chemistry, Skating, Out-of-Door Sports, History, by Mr. J. G. Edgar; and Comic Oriental Tales by Mr. C. S. Cheltnam, follow in abundance, together with a long series of tales and sketches, all profusely illustrated.

"George Stanley" gives some good accounts of a family settled in the backwoods of Canada. The scene is a relief from that Australia which has been so over-written of late; but yet, upon the whole, the adventures of emigrants, with breathless escapes, and gallant young boys, cruel Indians, fiery horses, and happy endings, are stretching out into too long a chain. But this is a good volume of its kind, and reads truthfully, except at page 86, where the reader is gravely informed that some time ago the cobra di capello, at the Zoological Gardens "swallowed a great railway rug." Perhaps Mr. Geikie means the boa-constrictor—the cobra is smaller than an ordinary eel.

Following in the track of history and the great Sir Walter, comes Mr. James Grant with "The Adventures of Rob Roy." Something like the story is already well known, but present-day youth will be glad to go over it in the present version. It is full of exciting scenes, deeds of daring—sometimes fabulous, possibly—and all told in a style which has gained many honours for the author. The engravings are far superior to the usual art effects of boys' books.

Mrs. Henry Wood, the author of "East Lynn," of course writes well; but the subject of "William Allair" will scarcely be admired. Whilst showing, properly enough, the impropriety of "running away to sea," the English naval and mercantile marine are treated very harshly. Indeed, all boys are strongly recommended never to think of the sea, whether they run away to it or go with their parents' consent. The hero, of course, does run away, and another youngster enlists for a soldier. They suffer terribly for some few years and die miserably in an Indian hospital. But, as many others, especially in our Sikh war, suffered miserably and perished in hospitals, the intended moral is scarcely made out.

Young ladies have every chance of reading about themselves in "Marian and her Pupils." It is all about girls, and the very existence of boys seems almost unknown. The story is throughout highly decorous, and sometimes gives glimpses of good but dull society. It is just suited for Mrs. Trimmer's pupils—when they have finished their education.

"The Happy Home" will suit very little children, and might be read aloud to those not so far advanced in cultivation as to read for themselves. The "Red House" appears to be a very nice place; but circumstances, at last, send the family to Malta. In the meantime, the children amuse themselves in all kinds of ways, and are fortunate in having pretty stories told to them.

Of words of one syllable, three letters preferred, are "Tiny Stories" made up. It will be found useful as a "First Reading Book." It is clearly printed, and contains some pretty woodcuts.

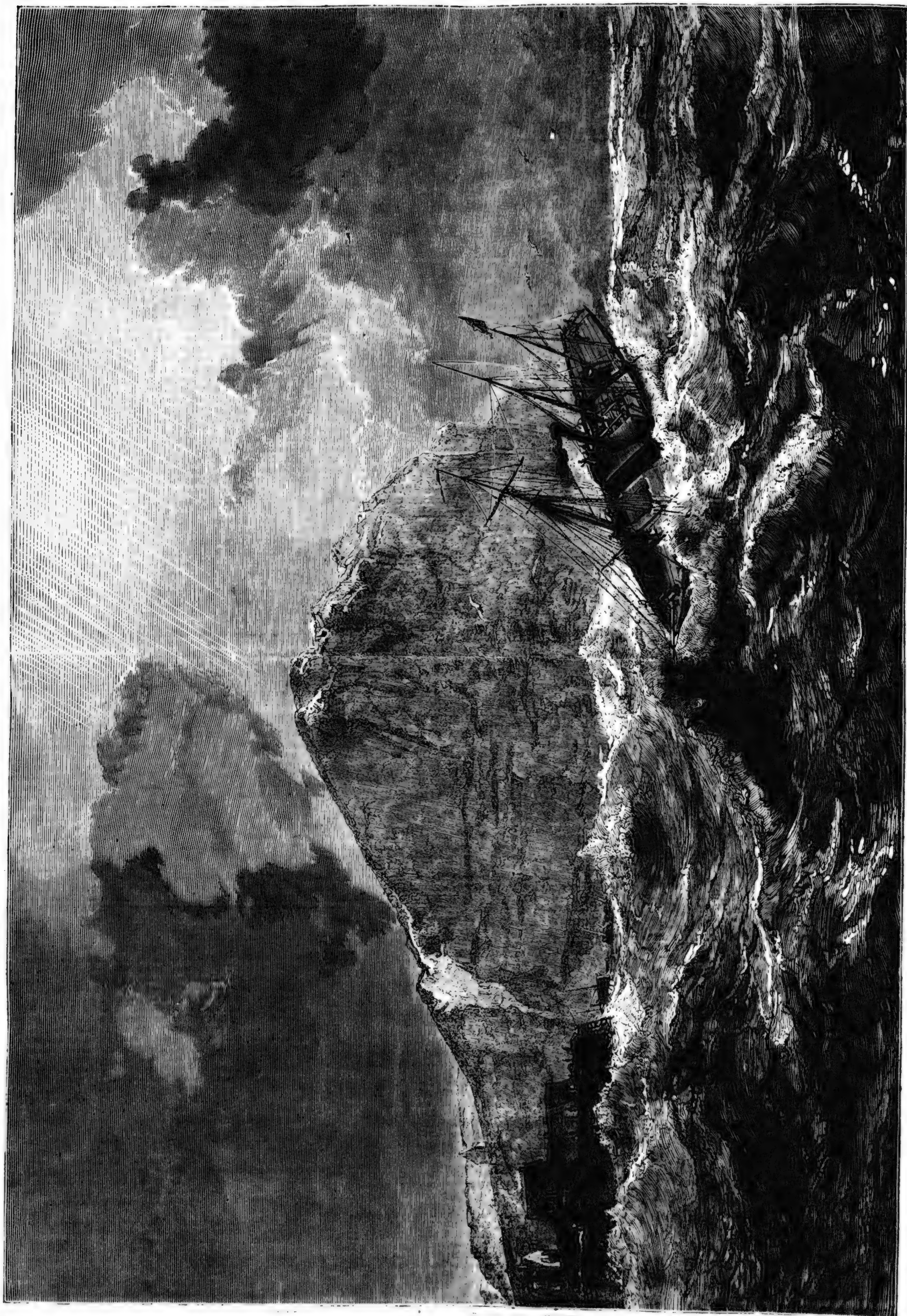
The story of "Little Blue Hood," who is stolen by a wicked old woman, and turned into a spangled street dancer, is very charmingly told by Thomas Miller. The character of the little girl is exceedingly pretty, and teaches the goodness of being good under all circumstances. "Aunt Maddy's Diamonds" is less pretentious; but made amusing by a naughty young lady of ten, who is always in trouble. There is a girl like Miss Fanny in every household, and she would do well to read a sketch of her own amabilities.

"Learning better than House and Land," being in a new edition, may almost speak for itself. The title is sufficient explanation.

Messrs. Routledge also supply some picture-books of an excellent description. "The Child's Picture Scrapbook" is a large folio, filled with cuts, large and small, and generally accompanied by some easy-reading letterpress. The "British Soldiers, Sailors, and Volunteers" are distinct books, giving coloured sketches in full length of the men of all Services in uniform. Children burning for glory by land or sea will be enchanted with these pictures.

IMPORTANT GUNNERY EXPERIMENTS AT SHOEBOURNNESS.—On Tuesday there was an important target trial at Shoeboourness, the target representing a portion of Mr. E. J. Reed's ship Bellerophon that is about to be constructed in Chatham Dockyard. Under the conditions of trial, such as they were, the target repelled both Armstrong and Whitworth shot and shell, there being no complete penetration of the iron skin and teak backing. Among the visitors were His Royal Highness the Crown Prince of Prussia, who roughed the trial out in the same fashion as other people, and afterwards partook of the scanty and indifferent Admiralty luncheon without the least reserve of formality.

RICH GOLD-DIGGINGS have been discovered in Vancouver Island, within ten miles of the city of Victoria. New mines have also been recently found in British Columbia.



A STORM OFF YFORT.

THE LATE GALE.

AGAIN the storm has raged round our coasts and spent its fury far inland, after bringing destruction upon the vessels which were driving before it at sea or seeking shelter in some of our roadsteads. Added to the terrible records of calamities on our own shores, come the tidings of almost equal disasters on foreign coasts.

On the late arrival of some of the homeward-bound vessels in the river, tidings were brought of the accidents which had befallen those ships which had left the Thames just before the sudden and violent storm.

The *Cornelia*, outward bound, from Bremen, was wrecked on the Goodwin Sands. The brigantine *Belle*, Captain Pyne, bound from London for Algoa Bay, was driven from her anchors in the Downs by the force of the hurricane, and drove athwart a steamer, carrying away her foretopmast, and the captain, chief mate, and three men are missing. The second mate, one lady passenger, one seaman, and two boys were only left on board when the brigantine was fortunately picked up by the Napoleon steam-tug and a lugger called the *Buffalo*, of Broadstairs, which remained by her until the gale moderated, and succeeded in towing the disabled vessel into Ramsgate. A large Calcutta ship, known as the *Maxwell*, to escape being wrecked on the Goodwin, cut away her masts and so averted her destruction. She was insured for upwards of £50,000. A large fleet of vessels have sustained damage by loss of chains and spars; several have got into Ramsgate, Dover, and adjacent places.

The various mail-steamers between Southampton, Havre, and the Channel Islands have been more or less retarded by the violent weather. The South-Western Company's fine new steamer *Normandy*, which was due at Southampton from Jersey and Guernsey early on Wednesday evening, did not arrive till between eight and nine o'clock on Thursday night. She behaved admirably in this heavy weather, and on her arrival in dock the passengers presented Captain Harvey with an address of thanks for "the sterling qualities of a British sailor displayed on this, one of the most terrific passages ever known between Jersey and Southampton." During the voyage several large ships were passed, some lying to and others running under bare poles, and some were noticed with their topmasts gone.

At Lowestoft the steamer *Norfolk*, Captain Bolland, from Rotterdam for Harwich, with cattle, &c., in the service of the Great Eastern Railway Company, was forced into the harbour, having been blown to leeward of her port. She came in in want of fuel



"THE CRADLE."—(FROM A PICTURE BY PALLIERE.)

and with twenty-five sheep, four calves, and one cow dead. The steamer, which experienced very heavy weather, is discharging her cargo. The brig *Herald*, of Whitby, Captain Shaw, from London for Hartlepool, in ballast, drove on the Mouse Sand about five p.m. on Thursday, and commenced filling with water. The crew remained with her until nine p.m., when, as the vessel had nearly filled, they took to their boat, and were picked up about midnight by the schooner *Pilot*, of Goole, which brought them into the Lowestoft Roads.

At Chatham the wind blew with great violence from the westward and northward up till nearly twelve o'clock on Thursday night, when it fell, and the night became fine and clear. The mercury rose rapidly until it reached 31.95 deg. In the harbour all the vessels rode out the gale in safety with their topgallantmasts struck and their yards pointed well to the wind. While the storm raged the waves were washed completely over the caissons at the entrance of the docks, causing considerable inconvenience to those working on board the ships under repair. Fears were entertained that the roofs over some of the building-ships would be destroyed, but, beyond some broken glass, they escaped uninjured. The force of the wind when the gale was at its height was 20lb. to the square foot.

It was at Holyhead that the storm seems to have been most violent, if there can be degrees in anything so terrible. The *Elizabeth*, from Liverpool bound to Halifax, was driven from her anchorage and foundered in the bay, the captain, the mate, and four men saving themselves by clinging to the broken timbers. The *Hibernia*, bound to Dublin, was driven on to the rocks; and the crew of the *Westbourne*, for Honduras, were drowned after they had taken to the boat. Amongst a great number of accidents and many wrecks, the fate of the *Harmony*, a little vessel from Ayr, was the most remarkable. She passed close to the end of the Great Eastern jetty, from which the mail-steamers take their departure, and in a moment four of the crew gave a leap for life and reached the jetty. One boy only remained on board. About two o'clock the next morning Constables Toohill and Hughes, of the Anglesey police, were sent by the inspector along the shore to see whether any persons might be in want of assistance. They heard the poor boy on board the *Harmony* hallooing for help. By means of a rope they pulled him ashore through a tremendous surf, and in about fifteen minutes afterwards the ship broke in a thousand pieces.

At Plymouth, on Saturday, a whole fleet of merchant-vessels, including a large num-



INTERIOR OF THE CHARING-CROSS RAILWAY STATION.

ber of foreigners, sought shelter in the Sound, and most of them had suffered serious damage; and fresh disasters are continually becoming known as having happened to ships along our most dangerous coasts. Nothing but the heroism and unflinching efforts of our life-boat crews and those brave fellows who are always ready to face danger in order to save human life, could have kept the terrible list of the drowned at as low a number as appears at present. Amongst the most glorious of the efforts which have ever been made to carry help to the despairing will stand those of the Ramsgate life-boat and the steam-tug Aid in saving the passengers and crew of the Fusilier, which was driven on to the Girdler Sound, and the Demerara, that lay hopelessly on the Shingles. For sixteen hours, in a night as black as pitch, were these gallant fellows fighting with the sea for the lives of the men, women, and children whom they ultimately rescued and took ashore in triumph.

The Fusilier was a passenger-vessel; and, although she burnt tar barrels as signals, it was hard work either to see her or to get alongside; but the feat was accomplished at last, and the women and children, lowered by buntlines, were received in safety by those who had fought their way so bravely to the rescue.

After the Fusilier it was time to look to the Demerara, of whose peril on the Shingles the Ramsgate heroes heard by signal almost immediately after they had transferred their living cargo to the tug. Wet, weary, and beaten by the raging storm, they determined to save her, too, and with that will which the British sailor knows how to set against danger, and difficulty, and death itself, reached her to find the crew of eighteen men and the Trinity pilot clinging to the rigging, as, indeed, they had been for ten hours of that fearful night. All of them were got off, and that glorious little tug, "well named the Aid," carried into Ramsgate Harbour her freight of a hundred and twenty souls.

Would that the reports from abroad were no more terrible than this. Even as we write it is known that a telegram has been received from Nieu Dieppe, on the coast of Holland, communicating the terrible intelligence that an emigrant-ship had been wrecked, and nearly 400 persons drowned, during the recent gales. The ill-fated ship was the Wilhelmshof, Captain Kross commander, built in 1853, and upwards of 1200 tons burden. She left Hamburg in the early part of last week for Australia, and is reported to have had about 400 German emigrants on board. She had also a cargo of general merchandise. It would seem that she had scarcely cleared the Elbe before the awful gale of Thursday was encountered, and, the wind blowing direct upon the land, the ship was unable to get an offing clear of the long line of low shoals which abound on this part of the coast. She was brought up at her anchor, but the furious gale and the heavy waves from the North Sea no doubt quite overwhelmed the vessel, and she was driven on the Schelling Bank, a dangerous shoal near the entrance of the Zuyder Zee, where she speedily began to break up. Of four hundred persons on board, only forty-four are reported to have been saved. Probably no portion of the coast of the north of Europe suffered so much from the tremendous effects of the late storm as this line of coast. Upwards of 100 coasting-vessels are enumerated as having been wrecked or stranded, and many of the crews were drowned. Several were bound to England.

In France, too, the casualties have been very serious, and, indeed, some part of the French coast is so dangerous that a wreck frequently means utter destruction of ship and crew, with little hope of either being saved. Our Engraving will give the reader some idea of the effect which must be produced by such a gale as that which has lately visited us, when it thunders against that high coast of Yport, near Pécamp, on the Harfleur coast. Amongst the disasters at this place was the loss of the schooner Gabrielle, which had made the voyage from England, and was wrecked at the entrance of the harbour, where three out of its six men perished.

At Brest the roof erected over the Bretagne line-of-battle ship was blown away, and the vessels in the port found it most difficult to keep fast at their moorings.

At Havre a large number of vessels in the different docks were driven from their moorings and impelled against each other. The schooner Reine des Cieux had her stern stove in, the English steamer Countess of Lonsdale was driven with such force against the jetty as to displace several of the large blocks of stone of which it is constructed, and the Colibri, Finisterre, Eure, Enfant de France, and Surate were more or less seriously damaged. A Norwegian ship which had been driven ashore was broken up by the fury of the waves, and the coast strewn with wreck. Several persons were blown down by the wind—one man, a labourer, breaking his arm in falling. It was found necessary to close a number of shops in the town to preserve the windows, and several trees on the Boulevard were torn up by their roots. But the most distressing result of the storm, as it affected the French coast, took place at Cherbourg. In the morning of Wednesday week, the Argus, a merchant-vessel belonging to Granville, went on shore on the north-westerly point of the Ile Pelée. On hearing of the accident, the commandant of the iron-clad frigate Couronne sent a boat with eighteen men, under the command of Lieutenant De Besplas, to the assistance of the stranded vessel, and after some hours' strenuous exertions they succeeded in getting her off. Unfortunately, in towing her away, the ropes broke and the boat was swamped, and all on board, with the exception of two men who were left on the vessel in tow, perished. The Argus was afterwards driven on shore a second time, and went to pieces. All on board, with the exception of the Captain, were saved.

THE CRADLE.

THE picture from which our Engraving is taken is the work of M. Palliere, a native of Rio Janeiro, and formerly a pupil of M. Picot. Amidst the picturesque life in Spanish America, the artist has but faithfully to reproduce ordinary scenes to insure a picture full of colour and effect. Even this humble interior—the almost bare hut, the mandolin hanging on the wall, the rude frame in which the sleeping child is suspended from the ceiling, the once-gaudy shawl used as an extempore canopy—all give an opportunity for the careful handling and picturesque treatment which is M. Palliere's forte.

This interior is that of the "rancho," the settlement of the small farmer or "vaquero" (cattle herd). Its form is that of an ordinary house, with gables and sloping roof, but its walls are peculiar. They are constructed of gigantic bamboo canes, and these are laced together by cords of the "pita" also; but the interiors are left open so as freely to admit the breeze. Coolness, not warmth, is the object of these buildings. The roof is a thatch of palm-leaves, and, with far-impending eaves, casts off the heavy rain of the tropics.

There is but little furniture within. There is no table; there are few chairs, and these of raw hide nailed upon a rude frame. There are bedsteads of bamboo; the universal tortilla-stone for kneading the flat, thin, cakes which serve as bread; mats of palm-leaf, baskets of the same material; a small altar like fireplace in the middle of the floor; a bandola, hanging by the wall; a saddle of stamped leather, profusely ornamented with silver nails and plates; a hair bridle, with huge mameluke bit; an escosette and sword, or "machette"; a number of gaudily-painted bowls, dishes, and cups, but neither knife, fork, nor spoon—such are the movables of a "rancho" in the "tierra caliente."

You may see the ranchero by the door, or attending to his small, wiry and spirited horse outside. The man himself is either of Spanish blood or a "mestizo." His costume has already been described in our columns.

His wife may be seen moving about the rancho, or upon her knees before the "metate," or stone, kneading tortillas, and besmearing them with red capsicum. She generally wears a petticoat of a flaming bright colour, very short, and showing her well-turned but stockinged ankles and small slippered feet. Her arms, neck, and shoulders are partly concealed by the bluish-grey scarf or "sebozo" that hangs loosely from her head.

THE CHARING-CROSS RAILWAY STATION.

THIS important station, of the interior of which we this week give an Engraving, is now very near completion. Our illustration is taken from a point looking direct towards the back of the hotel upon

which the station abuts, and from which there will be ingress and egress to and from the Strand. Seven lines of rail are included within the breadth of the span of the arch forming the station. The total length of covered way is 508 ft., the breadth from wall to wall 168 ft., and the entire height 100 ft., from the level of the railway, the side walls being 42 ft. in height. The whole length of these walls is divided into eleven or twelve bays, from the piers of which spring the principal arches, and between which are two lighter ones. The weight of the principals is two tons. The whole span is filled in with rolled glass, banded with zinc. Mr. Hawkshaw, the engineer, seems to have made his design as light as possible, consistently with strength, and the colouring, being of brown relieved with gold, has a pleasing effect.

The temporary wooden erections for Custom-house purposes are at present rather unsightly, as well as the covering to the ticket platform.

Messrs. Cochrane and Co. are the contractors for all the metal-work of the station, as well as all the bridges along the line; and, as far as we can judge, they have performed their part with much ability.

CONCERTS.

MDME. ARABELLA GODDARD was again the chief attraction at the last Monday Popular Concert. On this occasion she chose Weber's sonata in C major—the earliest and the most popular of the four which fell from the pen of the gifted author of "Der Freischütz." Immense as was Weber's popularity during his short lifetime, his extraordinary genius is not even yet rated at its due value. He laboured under the disadvantage of an incomplete musical education; but very few of the greatest men in the world's history have been more bounteously endowed with the Divine afflatus. Weber's genius was essentially dramatic; but the lovely melodies, enriched by harmony no less lovely, that fascinate us in every one of his operatic works, charm us almost equally in his comparatively rare compositions for the chamber. Weber seems, indeed, to exert a peculiar spell over all the admirers of his genius, and the spell is more powerful when it is wrought through the medium of Mme. Arabella Goddard's lissom fingers. In mechanical dexterity this highly-gifted lady has long been without a peer among living pianists, and to this executive perfection she has of late years been gradually adding increased musical sentiment and matured musical intelligence. These qualities combine to place her in the very first rank of solo performers, and they could not have been displayed to better advantage than in Weber's captivating work. The opening allegro was taken with a deliberate steadiness which invested the movement with unaccustomed impressiveness and force; a deliciously reposeful charm pervaded the andante, the "dying fall" of which was modulated by the most delicate gradations of sound; the aerial grace of the scherzo was rendered with a delicacy no less exquisite; and, if we venture to call in question the expediency of taking the final *moto perpetuo* at so great a speed, we are bound to express our admiration of the ease with which the great difficulties of the movement were surmounted. So splendid a performance we have of late years heard from no pianist but Mme. Arabella Goddard.

The lady also led Hummel's favourite septet in D minor, the flute being assigned to Mr. Rockstro; the oboe to Mr. Barret, most faultless of oboists; the horn to Mr. C. Harper, who played the trying, sustained solo passages in the scherzo with capital effect; the viola to Mr. Webb, the double bass to Mr. Severn, and the violoncello to Mr. Paque, the experienced substitute for Signor Piatti, whose speedy return from the Continent is anxiously hoped for by all lovers of music. The concert was opened by Beethoven's quartet in A from the first set, and brought to a close with one by the ever-genial Haydn. If the last piece in the programme must be a string quartet, Haydn is certainly the composer from whose large repertory it should be selected; but we much doubt the expediency of introducing a composition of this nature so late in the evening. Surely, a better place for a quartet would be at the beginning of the second part, and if it were relegated to this position the concert might be wound up with a duet sonata. Last Monday's concert was a trifle too long—a rare fault at these entertainments—for, in addition to the instrumental pieces we have named, M. Lotto introduced a *morceau de concert* of his own composition, which, being an allegro, and already fitted with orchestral accompaniments, "needs," as the programme states with incontrovertible accuracy, "but a slow movement and finale to be a concert in form." We cannot plead guilty to any ardent longing for the completion of the work, for the *morceau* that we heard is particularly barren of originality. It is, however, naturally adapted to display the composer's executive proficiency, and he was, of course, highly applauded; but the piece should not have been admitted into a classical programme. The vocalists announced to appear were Mme. Rudersdorf and Mr. Renwick. The lady, however, was incapacitated by an attack of ophthalmia, and her place was supplied by Miss Emily Spiller, whose sympathetic voice was heard with pleasure in Spohr's "Rose Softly Blooming" and Mendelssohn's "First Violet." On the day of the concert, by-the-by, we observed in the *Kölnische Zeitung* a critique, set off by the usual German sneers at English taste, on a performance of the "Messiah," given a few days ago at Cologne, in which Mme. Rudersdorf sustained the chief soprano part. A day or two before that she was singing at the Crystal Palace, so the energy of the versatile lady cannot be doubted; but can we be surprised at the frequent apologies that are made for vocalists when they rush about Europe in such trying weather as this? We are bound to add, however, that Mme. Rudersdorf is very rarely absent from her place, and that ophthalmia is, unhappily for the sufferer, but too good a reason for not fulfilling her engagement. Mr. Renwick's songs were Mr. Smart's "Estelle" and Curseleman's "The sailor draws near land," to both of which his fine baritone voice gave good effect.

Jullien, *jeune*, treads closely in the steps of his father. He opened his first campaign with a miscellaneous programme modelled on those of the celebrated *Mons.* and of which the dreadful British Army Quadrille was the chief feature; he now, towards the close of his short season, renews the interest of the concerts à la mode de feu son père by one of those classical nights which his father, to his credit be it said, originated. Why a programme devoted to the works of one musician should be found more attractive than a selection of equally good music representing several composers, it is difficult to say. Perhaps the custom grew out of an accident. The first Mendelssohn night was given very shortly after the great man's death, when the world, just awakened by their loss to a full appreciation of his genius, were irresistibly attracted by his very name. The Mendelssohn nights thus became a great success, and were succeeded by Beethoven and Mozart nights, which were no less valued by the musical public. But it was the taste for good music generally, and not the partiality for the music of one particular composer, that made them popular. If the programme is so arranged as to exhibit the gradual development of a composer's genius (as was done by Mr. Mellon on one of his Beethoven nights last autumn), it has a distinct artistic value; but otherwise there is no corresponding gain for the loss of variety and contrast incurred by this arrangement. As well might we have a Shakespeare night at the Princess' with three tragedies, a John Oxenford night at the Haymarket with seven farces, or a Tom Taylor night anywhere with any number of French pieces. We cannot but be grateful, however, to M. Jullien for the two classical programmes he has given us, both of which have been devoted to Mendelssohn. The first programme included the Italian symphony, the first three movements of which were most admirably played; the overture to "Ray Blas;" and, with the single exception of the nocturno, all the enchanting instrumental music to "The Midsummer Night's Dream." Signor Sivori played the concerto with perfect Italian elegance and faultless taste, though without the passion and enthusiasm which Herr Joachim, for instance, infuses into it. The popular "First Violet" was sung in English by the talented Mlle. Volpini, with much more expression than we were prepared to find in a vocalist who delights in feats of agility, and she surprised the audience into an enthusiastic encore. Of the part-songs the less said the better; indeed,

M. Jullien's partiality for a chorus is unaccountable, seeing that in this respect he is outvalued by the majority of the London societies. On Wednesday the performances were for the benefit of Mme. Jullien, the widow of the late conductor; and on the 21st a *bal d'opéra*, which, being translated, means, we presume, a mask ball, is announced to wind up the season. Three days afterwards, by-the-by—that is, on Christmas Eve, there is to be, in the same building, a grand performance of "The Messiah."

A new entertainment, by "Mr. and Mrs. Galer (late Fanny Reeves)," to quote the advertisement, consisting of two operettas, for two persons only, was announced to open on Monday night, but it has been postponed in consequence of the lady's indisposition.

The next grand opera to be produced at COVENT GARDEN is, they say, an adaptation, by Mr. Fitzball, of Goldsmith's "She Stoops to Conquer," set to music by Mr. Macfarren; and on Boxing Night, of all ill-chosen nights in the year, an original operetta is to precede the pantomime. May it be listened to with all the attention it deserves!

LAW AND CRIME.

A COMIC singer, known as Sam Cowell, applied to the Bankruptcy Court. His debts were about £900. It was admitted that his emoluments had been £40 per week, although recently he had received only £12, the balance being retained to satisfy a debt due to his employer. The counsel for a judgment creditor pointed out that the bankrupt had a large income but had made no proposition to arrange with his creditors. On the other hand, the bankrupt's counsel suggested that it would only be a "graceful thing" on the part of the creditors to allow him to "retire into privacy." He referred to the appearance of the bankrupt, who is well known to his admirers for his skillfulness in making up. On this occasion he had prudently discarded the black eye and ruby nose with which he was wont to produce his most comic effects, and, taking advantage of a swollen cheek, appeared with his whole head enveloped in a white bandage, after the manner of the professionals termed "mumpers." His counsel declared that the bankrupt was a mere wreck, and Mr. Commissioner Fane declared he would "impose no terms on this poor man," who is consequently discharged to the untrammelled enjoyment of his £40 salary weekly.

The decisions of the Vice-Chancellors of England are, as a rule, somewhat above criticism. To these learned gentlemen belongs eminently, not the expounding of the law, but the construction of the principles of that equity which, according to an ancient maxim, shall prevail where the laws are silent. It is not frequently that the judgments of our Vice-Chancellors become the subjects of appeal, and seldom, indeed, that such appeals are successful. But, while professing the highest respect for the vice-chancery office, we hold it by no means incompatible with such a sentiment to offer criticism upon what appears to us to be an extraordinary decision. The case to which we refer is that of "Defree v. Bedford," before Vice-Chancellor Stuart, on the 4th inst. The circumstances were as follow:—A certain property in the Haymarket was put up for sale by order of the Court of Chancery, and under certain conditions of sale. The conditions provided that, in default on the purchaser's part of completion by a time limited, the premises might be resold, and that the purchaser should pay the deficiency, if any, in the price obtained, in addition to the costs and expenses of the second sale. There was also the usual provision for a deposit by the highest bidder, but there was no proviso for the forfeiture of the deposit in case of non-compliance on the purchaser's part with the conditions of sale. At the sale the property was knocked down to Mr. Boucicault, who paid the deposit required, amounting to £916. Mr. Boucicault became bankrupt. His assignees therefore, by act of law, became entitled either to complete or to relinquish the contract. This was a position unprovided for by the conditions of sale. The assignees elected not to complete. Thereupon the vendors, instead of reselling and reimbursing themselves for any loss out of the deposit, applied to the Court to declare the entire deposit forfeited. This was opposed by the assignees, upon the ground that the conditions provided an indemnity against any deficiency upon resale. We cannot venture to abridge the Vice-Chancellor's judgment, as reported in the *Times*, and therefore subjoin it *in extenso*:—

The Vice-Chancellor said that the fifteenth condition was not intended to apply to the case of a bankruptcy, because in such a case the right to a resale arose from other circumstances than those contemplated by that condition. Where a deposit was exacted by the Court as part of the contract entered into by the purchaser, it was done for the benefit of the vendor by way of security for the performance of the contract; but where, after the payment of the deposit, and before the completion of the contract, the purchaser became bankrupt, his rights were transferred to others who were at liberty to complete or to abandon the contract. In this case there had been a default on the part of the purchaser. Then, how could a person who was in default thereby have acquired any right to the money which was parted with as a security that there should be no default? And if he could not by his default have acquired such a right, how could his assignees do so, who might have completed the purchase if they had so chosen? There must be a declaration that the deposit was forfeited.

We conceive this judgment to be a legitimate matter for criticism—probably even the basis of a successful appeal. The ordinary proviso for forfeiture was omitted from the conditions of sale. It is easily to be conceived that a clutching condition, such as this certainly is, however usual, might be fairly omitted under a sale by direction of a court of equity, and for reasons easily to be supplied. Vice-Chancellor Stuart's decision gives as much force to the omitted clause as its insertion could have done if confirmed by the Court upon question arising. Such a question might especially have arisen upon the claim of the assignees to their right to forego the purchase after a bankruptcy—a circumstance, according to the Vice-Chancellor, not contemplated even by the condition under which the rights of resale arose. The deposit, according to his Honour, is made for the benefit of the vendor "by way of security." He then asks, how can a person in default acquire any right to the money parted with "as deposit?" The answer is clear. The depositor acquires no right, any more than any other pledger or mortgagor, to the property deposited or mortgaged. But he has not parted with his original right therein beyond the amount for which it has been pledged. Every holder of security, from the mortgagee of a freehold estate to the pawnbroker who takes the commonest article in pledge, is regarded in equity as trustee for the mortgagor for the actual or realised value of the security beyond the amount secured. Put the question the other way, and ask how the vendor can acquire any right to the deposit, acknowledged to be made "by way of security" to the balance, after his indemnification against all loss and expenses of resale, and the question would be indeed difficult to answer, specially in the absence, which cannot be supposed unintentional under the circumstances, of the common proviso for its forfeiture. Without the slightest interest in this case, as between the parties, we cannot but hope that such a judgment as this will not be suffered to remain as a settlement of a question of such high legal importance.

THE ALLEGED ENLISTMENTS FOR THE KEARSADE.—A letter from Queenstown in the *Daily Express* gives details of the landing of men there from the Kearsade, the same that had taken on board early in November. She remained nine days at Brest, and it is supposed she has returned to give back the recruits in consequence of the pressure put upon the Federal Government by Lord Russell. On Monday one of Messrs. Scott's pilot-boats, when off the harbour, was signalled to come alongside by the Kearsade, and sixteen men, all belonging to the neighbourhood, with one exception, were put on board. The moment the men landed they were taken to the Custom House, and then severally examined by the Admiralty officer. The men, who were not very communicative, said that no reason was given by Captain Warslow for putting them ashore, but that he said he was sorry to part with them. Their haversacks, with which they were provided, were then detained, and they were allowed to depart. They each of them wore a blue jacket, with embroidered star on the chest, and a sort of naval cap. They quickly spread through the town, and expressed themselves in glowing terms of the fare and treatment on board the American steamer, and all seem ill-pleased with the change. The same correspondent states that a "notice" is placed in a prominent position on the Custom House at Queenstown by Rear-Admiral T. Jones, senior officer on the coast of Ireland, warning all persons against shipment on board a screw-steamer said to have just left an English port fitted to cruise against American commerce.

METROPOLITAN MARKETS.

CORN EXCHANGE.—Very moderate supplies of home-grown wheat have been on sale this week. Good and fine dry samples have fairly supported previous quotations; but damp produce has declined 1s. per quarter. In all descriptions of foreign wheat sales have progressed slowly, at barely late rates. Floating cargoes of grain have moved off slowly, at about ordinary prices. The barley trade, with the exception of good and fine malting descriptions, has continued quiet, and the value of malt has a downward tendency. In oats—of which there has been a moderate supply on sale—a fair business has been transacted, on former terms. Beans and peas have sold heavily, at drooping prices. Flour has ruled steady, on former terms.

ENGLISH CURRENCY.—Wheat, Essex and Kent, red, 4s. to 4s. 6d.; ditto, white, 4s. to 4s. 6d.; Norfolk and Suffolk, 4s. to 4s. 6d.; grinding barley, 2s. to 2s. 6d.; malting ditto, 2s. to 3s.; malt, 5s. to 6s.; oats, 1s. to 2s.; beans, 2s. to 3s.; peas, 3s. to 3s. 6d. per quarter. Town-made flour, 3s. to 4s.; country marks, 2s. to 3s. 6d. per 50 lb.

CATTLE.—Beasts have somewhat declined in price; but sheep have sold at high rates. Calves and pigs are steady.—Beef, from 3s. 6d. to 5s. 2d.; mutton, 4s. to 6s.; veal, 4s. to 5s.; and pork, 3s. 6d. to 4s. 8d. per 10 lb. to sink the offal.

NEWCASTLE AND LIVERPOOL.—The trade generally is firm, at the annexed quotations.—Beef from 3s. 6d. to 4s. 8d.; mutton, 4s. to 5s. 2d.; veal, 4s. to 5s.; and pork, 3s. 6d. to 4s. 8d. per 10 lb. by the carcass.

TEA.—The market is rather quiet, on former terms. The export from China to Great Britain has amounted to 71,000,000 lb. **SUGAR.**—A very moderate business is passing in raw sugar, at about previous rates. The stock amounted to 25,617 tons, against 67,921 tons last year. Refined sugar is dull, at 5s. 6d. for common brown lump.

COFFEE.—The inquiry is of fair average extent, and prices are supported. The stock consists of 10,106 tons, against 8521 tons in 1862.

RICE.—We have to notice less activity in the demand for rice. The late advance in the currency is, however, supported. Stock, 41,113 tons, against 35,105 tons last year.

PROVISIONS.—All kinds of provisions are in slow request, and inferior qualities have slightly declined in value. **BUTTER.**—The market is quiet, at 10s. 6d. per cwt., on the spot; rough fat is now quoted at 2s. 1d. per 5 lb. Stock, 70,764 casks, against 56,900 casks in 1862.

OILS.—Lined oil has fallen to 36s. per cwt. Rape is a slow sale, at 41s. 6d. for foreign refined. French spirits of turpentine are dull, at 6s. 6d. to 6s. 8d. per cwt. Tar and resin are rather quiet.

SPICES.—The demand for rum is less active; nevertheless, prices rule firm. Proof Leewards, 1s. 8d. per gallon. Brandy moves off slowly, at 3s. to 11s. 4d. per gallon. English gin, proof, for export, 2s. 9d. to 3s. per gallon.

HAY AND STRAW.—Meadow hay, £3 to £4 10s.; clover, £4 to £5 10s.; and straw, £1 5s. to £1 10s. per load of 35 trusses.

COALS.—Best house coals, 20s. to 20s. 6d.; second, 18s. to 19s.; Hartley's, 14s. 9d. to 15s. 9d. per ton.

HOPS.—The trade is firm. English qualities command 90s. to 170s.; and foreign, 70s. to 160s. per cwt.

POTATOES.—The business doing is only moderate. Prices, however, rule firm.

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MAJESTY'S THEATRE.—The Season will positively terminate on Saturday, the 19th inst. Vocalist—Mlle. Volpini; Violin—Signor Sivori; M. Jullien's new grand Quadrille, entitled "The Congress of the Grand Opera," Three Military Bands, and full Chorus. Commence at Eight. Admission, One Shilling.

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